

The Jewishness of the Scriptures

Obviously, without an understanding of the God given festivals the completeness of Jesus and prophecy cannot be understood. Perhaps we should not call these the Jewish festivals because they were not just for the Jews, which is why God calls them His festivals. They only came to the Jew first, but now we have become engrafted branches (Rom 11:17). When a branch is grafted into another tree it doesn't change the tree, the branch is changed. Are we trying to change the tree by ignoring the festivals of God? Let us look at Easter for a moment. Is that described in the Bible? Even though what we celebrate at Easter time is Biblical, the actual festival is not. So how did it come about? The word was adopted from pagans and was celebrated long before Christ walked the earth. It was celebrated by the Assyrians, Phoenicians and even the Philistines. Look it up in a dictionary or two and you will see I am not making this up. The festival involved the "Rites of Spring" near the Equinox of Venus when it was believed that the Earth mother was impregnated by the Sun (Go to Carls bad caverns and you will hear the same thing). They engaged in ritual sex acts and used fertility symbols like eggs and rabbits and baked round cakes to the Queen of the Heavens. To ensure a good growing season, pagans then decorated eggs and hid them from the evil spirits.

According to the 1934 Britannica Encyclopedia under EASTER it says, "Ostara, or Eastre, was the goddess of Spring in the religion of the ancient Angles and Saxons. Every April a festival was celebrated in her honor. With the beginnings of Christianity, the old gods were put aside. From then on the festival was celebrated in honor of the resurrection of Christ, but was still known as Easter after the old goddess." That is interesting when God's Word says, "Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their *Asherah poles* in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and *wipe out their names* from those places" (Deut 12:3). How did we allow this corruption to enter the church? It started with Constantine I in 325 A.D. when 220 bishops gathered to establish common practices in the Nicene Council and universalized the Roman Catholic Church. However, it also rooted us in paganism with a Christian twist. Many people do not realize that there were many solid Christians who rejected the Nicea beliefs. Unfortunately, what happened was the authority for doctrine was taken out of the hands of God and given into the hands of men. Now, the church would interpret Scripture, not the Holy Spirit. It was this freedom from Biblical authority that Constantine gave us the term "Sunday" which was also called *Sol Invictus Mithras* (the day of the unconquerable sun, Mithras as inscribed on his coins). In 321 AD he made a decree that anyone working on the day of the Sun (Mithras) would be put to death. Monday was so named after the moon and really means the "day of the Moon." Tuesday is the "day of Tiu," a deity of war. Wednesday was Well, Duh or "Woden's Day," a deity skilled in magic. Thursday was "Thor's day" a son of Woden and a deity of thunder. Friday was "Frey day," the wife of Woden. Saturday was the "Day of Saturn," a deity for agriculture. Even the pagan months were labeled by Constantine with March (Mars), April (Aprilis, the month of Venus), May (fertility god Maia), June (Juno, a female deity), July (named after Julius Caesar who was thought to be a god), August (named after Augustus Caesar, also viewed as a god). I think you get the picture. Constantine allowed paganism to infiltrate our society by "Christianizing" it. In order to unify the entire kingdom he allowed the Christians to

“add” God to the pagan rituals and thereby pleased both sides. This may be very new to many reading this book but I ask that you do not take my word for it, check it out for yourself. I am not trying to tell you to not celebrate Easter, I simply want you to see how the world has blinded us to certain truths of Scripture by replacing what God had given with something clearly not of God. You are about to see how the celebration of Passover fits Christ’s death and resurrection so much better than Easter? So why don’t we celebrate it? Probably because we have never taken the time to research it. Remember, God did say it was a “lasting ordinance.” Let’s begin this study by looking at Exodus:

Exo 6:6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: 7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

The true meaning of “Lord” as Redeemer is seen since He will deliver, free and redeem the Israelites. In so doing God will be both Lion and Lamb, Redeemer and Judge. With an outstretched welcoming and protecting arm He will redeem Israel, but with a mighty acts of Judgment He will destroy Egypt.

Not only will God rescue them, but He will not abandon them when it is all over. He will be their God and they will be His people. By their deliverance they would know this to be true and not some false prophecy. Also, the fulfillment of this would come shortly after their deliverance when God would speak to them on Mount Sinai. Unfortunately, they did not want to hear God’s voice, let alone listen to it. Once in the promised land they would know that God is faithful to His promises, even those of long ago. But sometimes knowledge is not good enough. One needs to accept it. The psalmist wrote, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it. But My people would not listen to Me; Israel would not submit to Me” (Psa 81:10-11).

Likewise, we wait for our delivery into our promised land. Though it seems like a long time, we will always be prepared like the widows with oil. Those who did not prepare, but grew tired of waiting, were not able to enter their promised land, “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you’” (Mat 25:10-12).

One of my favorite things about these verses is their connection with the Passover meal. God’s Word was prophetic here and is still repeated every Spring by both Messianic and non-Christian Jew alike for their celebration of Passover. I believe most Christians today do not fully understand Christianity, partly because we do not understand Judaism. I find it interesting that the early disciples never had the New Testament to tell others of Christ. They only had the Old Testament which the Jews would call the Tenach. Unfortunately, the very words “Old Testament” imply that the content therein is old and outdated or at least finished. One could be

no more misled. On Pentecost of Acts 2 we see over 3000 souls were saved by hearing about Jesus from the Old Testament. The Old Testament speaks more clearly of Jesus than much of the New Testament; especially when understanding the Biblical Feasts that were given by God and commanded to be “lasting” ordinances (Ex 12:14,17,24). The modern Christian church has made it an “old ordinance.” Now before you shut me out please give me time to explain.

We see that Passover, along with the other Biblical Festivals are laid out in Leviticus 23. In the first verses we read, “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, the *feasts of the Lord*, which you shall proclaim, *holy convocations*, even these are *My appointed feasts*.” Notice that these are not Jewish festivals, but the Lord’s feasts. In fact, the word for “feasts” is *Moed* in Hebrew. It is Strong’s #4150 which is defined as an appointment or fixed time or season. It can also be a signal to be appointed beforehand to warn or describe of something to come. In Genesis 1:14 we read that God made the sun, moon and stars to be “for, signs and for seasons.” We often think that God is saying the sun, moon and stars will mark out summer, winter, spring and fall. While there is certainly truth in this, it is not the context of the Hebrew here. Genesis uses the word *Moed* here as well, indicating that God created the heavenly hosts to mark out His feasts. It is no coincidence that all the Biblical festivals are assigned by the lunar calendar. The word of “signs” in Genesis 1:14 is *owth* and is Strong’s #226 which tells us it is a signal. Therefore, there can be no doubt that the very purpose of the heavenly hosts are to signal an appointment God has with us.

Further confirmation is seen in the Leviticus 23:1-2 passage in the previous paragraph. God said these feasts are holy convocations. The word “convocation” is Strong’s #4744 which tells us that it means to call something out like a public meeting or a rehearsal. In other words, these holy convocations were rehearsals for an event that would be fulfilled someday, much like there is a dress rehearsal before a play. Therefore, ALL of the festivals should be rehearsed as they are signaling to us, an appointed time. Some believe the rehearsal is over because Christ has already come. As you will see throughout this study, the rehearsal must go on because Christ did indeed come, however, we must not forget that He is coming again and these festivals are a rehearsal for that day as well.

Exodus 12:3-6 tells us that on the 10th day of the month a lamb was to be selected from the flock and then held until the 14th day of the month when it would be killed that evening. (There is certainly some symbolism here in that the time from the selection of the lamb to its sacrifice would be four days. Likewise, Jesus was selected before the creation of the world and 4,000 years later, He was our Passover lamb.) This is why during the time of Jesus, on the tenth day of the first month of Nisan, the High Priest would walk from the temple mount out the city gate leaving behind him a long row of priests who would mark a trail from the city gate all the way to the Temple. Passover was one of the required feasts, meaning all Jews had to go to Jerusalem to celebrate it as God commanded. Meanwhile, the High Priest went outside the city and picked out a lamb without blemish and would bring it to the gate. Once the lamb reached the gate, one of the priests would cry out, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” and everyone along the whole line would begin yelling out the same thing in unison. Now Jerusalem was literally bulging with people in every home and hotel. In fact, Josephus records that there were about 2.5 million people who would come to Jerusalem during this time. That would mean that there would be 250,000 lambs killed for this festival (1 lamb for every ten people). When

they heard this cry, each one would grab their palm branches and run to the path already marked by the priests, and when the High Priest went by, they would cry out the same words and lay down their palm branches while the lamb was led up to the Temple Mount.

Let's examine this before moving on. Jesus, our High Priest and the Lamb of God, rode on a donkey on the tenth day of the first month, the very day the High Priest was doing the above mentioned. When Jesus reached the gate people began crying out the same phrase they rehearsed every year without fully understanding its true meaning (Mark 11:9). (Sounds like some in the churches today). The Pharisees tried to get the disciples and the people to stop crying this out because it was ruining the "traditional" Passover ritual. Jesus replied by saying, "If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:39-40).

Next the lamb was to be taken and tied up on the temple mount to be examined for the next three days by every Scribe and Pharisee to make sure this lamb was without blemish. If it was, on the fourth day it was to become the Passover lamb, which was the 14th day of the first month. At 3:00 in the afternoon, the High Priest would say "I thirst" and was given a glass of wine to drink. He then would say, "It is finished" as he killed the lamb. This lamb had to be put in the oven before sundown without any of its bones being broken.

Where did Jesus go after His triumphant entry? To the temple mount where the lamb was to be taken (Mark 11:11). Like this lamb, Jesus was also examined by the Scribes and Pharisees for the next three days until, at the end of which, He was proclaimed to be "unblemished" by Pilate who said, "I find no basis for a charge against Him" (John 18:38, also Mat 26:59-60, Luke 23:13-15). Jesus also cried out "I thirst" (John 19:29), and "It is finished" (John 19:30) before giving up His own life silently as a lamb is quiet before its shearers (Acts 8:38). And as on the Passover lamb, not a bone was broken (John 19:36). In Mark 15:21,25 we see that it was the third hour that they crucified him by placing Jesus on the cross. This was the exact hour of the morning sacrifice (9 AM). In Matthew 27:45-47 we see that it was dark from the sixth hour to the ninth hour (Noon to 3:00 PM) and then at the ninth hour He cried out to God and gave up the ghost. Again, this was the exact time of the evening sacrifice when the Passover lamb was to be slain.

While all of this was going on with the High Priest, each individual household was also making preparations for the Passover. Though the Bible does not list the following tradition, it has been widely practiced in a Jewish household for centuries, including the time of Christ. In preparation for the Passover Meal, the mother of the house would remove all leaven from the house. Scripturally, leaven is a symbol of false doctrine and sin of the flesh, therefore, this was a symbol of getting the leaven or sin out of your life:

- "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are *puffed up*, [as yeast does] and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a *little leaven* leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor 5:1-2).
- "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us Therefore let us keep the

feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:7).

- “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Mat 16:6).

We also know that our bodies represent God’s house as it is the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17) in which the Holy Spirit dwells (Also 1 Peter 2:5). What did Jesus do after He rode into Jerusalem? He tried to rid His house of leaven as do Jewish mothers today. We read in John, “Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables.” (John 2:13-15) Jesus was clearly trying to cleanse his house of leaven.

Traditionally, once the mother has the leaven removed, a little is intentionally left behind where the father and the children take a candle, a feather and a wooden spoon to look throughout the house for any leftover leaven. When it is found the feather is used to brush the leaven onto the wooden spoon which is then wrapped up, taken outside the house and burned. Again, the Bible does not prescribe this tradition, yet the symbolism is Biblical. The feather is often viewed as God’s protective wings: “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall trust” (Ps 91:4). The wooden spoon is seen by Messianic Jews today as representative of the cross which has carried away our sins (Deut 21:22). As we said, the leaven represents the sin of which Christ took upon Himself on that cross: “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor 5:21). The leaven being wrapped up in a cloth represents Jesus body, which was taken down off the cross and wrapped in linen cloth (Mark 15:46). It is taken outside the house just as Jesus body was taken outside the city to undergo judgment on the cross: “Let us go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach” (Heb 13:13).

When the Passover meal is celebrated the evening of the 14th, there are four cups of wine used. Jesus would have used the same four cups when He celebrated the Passover. All four are taken from the promises in Exodus 6. The four cups are named as follows:

- 1) Cup of Sanctification – we are brought out from the yoke of the cares of this world. Just as Moses told Pharaoh that the Israelites were to be set free to serve the Lord (Ex 4:22-23), we can not serve two masters.
- 2) Cup of Judgment or Deliverance – we are freed from slavery by God’s judgment of the enemy. Romans 6:16 tells us that we are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness.
- 3) Cup of Redemption – we are redeemed by God and the power of His outstretched arms (Jer 32:17).
- 4) Cup of the Kingdom – we are taken as God’s people.

In Exodus 6:6-7 there are four main “I will” promises of God. I will put the number of the cup by each statement in the following section of these repeated verses. **“I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians (cup 1). I will free you from being slaves to them (cup 2), and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm (cup 3) and with mighty acts of**

judgment. 6:7 I will take you as my own people (cup 4), and I will be your God. Keep in mind, I am not interpreting this. This understanding has been practiced for centuries all the way back to the Exodus as Jewish records clearly show. Two of the cups of wine are drunk before dinner and two are drunk after dinner in the Passover celebration. In examining the Gospels we see that what we call the Lord's Supper, is really the Passover celebration. Jesus says in Luke "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:15-16). Note that the Passover meal will find "fulfillment" later in the kingdom of God (this will be the fourth cup called the cup of the kingdom). Then in verse 17 Luke states, "After taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes'" Since there were two cups before the meal, we see the Gospels do not record the first cup, but here the second cup is discussed and Jesus said He will not drink again until He does so in the kingdom of God. This is the great wedding banquet of the Lamb in Revelation 19, and once again, is the predicted fourth cup. This is precisely why there is a close connection to the Festivals and Revelation. Luke continues, "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me'" (Luke 22:19). This was the second cup, or the Cup of Judgment, that symbolized our freedom from the enemy of sin and the law through the body of Christ. Luke then says, "In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you'" (Luke 22:20). Here was the third cup of redemption that Jesus did not yet drink as He said back in verse 17. You will see why in a moment. Luke does not record the fourth cup being drunk, probably because of the foreshadowing of the fact that this cup symbolizes the future wedding banquet of the lamb.

Now let's go to the Garden of Gethsemane where we see Luke giving us further insight when Jesus prays, "Father, if you are willing, *take this cup from Me*; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42-43). What cup was Jesus talking about? The third cup. The one He did not drink yet. The cup of Redemption that God promised, "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm." Jesus was talking of the cross where He would outstretch His arms to redeem us. It is because of this redemption that Jesus now waits for us in heaven to drink the fourth and final cup with us, where in Exodus 6, God promised that we would be His people and He would be our God.

Before the fourth and final cup of Passover, the Jews would sing a hymn from Psalm 118 called the Hallel. We see that the Scriptures record them doing this in Mark 14:26. Seeing how Christ fulfilled Passover so specifically, let us look carefully at what they would have been singing from Psalm 118. "I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art *become my salvation*. The *stone which the builders rejected* is become the head stone of the corner. This is the *Lord's doing*; it is marvellous in our eyes (v 21-23). God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: *bind the sacrifice* with cords, even unto the horns of *the altar*" (v 27). He is *my salvation*. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the *right hand of the LORD does mighty things*. *The right hand of the LORD is lifted up*; the right hand of the LORD does mighty things" (v 14-16). Even what they were singing about in this rehearsal was being lived out right before their very eyes.

This feast is often called the feast of unleavened bread because for the next seven days they are to eat bread without yeast. Jesus was our bread of life (John 6:35) who was without leaven, or sin (Heb 4:15) It is called Passover, because this was the day the angel of the Lord passed over the houses that had the blood of the lamb on their doorposts in Egypt. The firstborn of every household died if the blood was not there. Again, the symbolism is clear as we read in Numbers 33:3-4 that it was on the 15th of the month that the Egyptians were burying their dead and it was on this day that Jesus, God's firstborn Son, was buried as he became a curse for us, that we might claim His blood so the angel of death would pass over us.

Though we have only scratched the surface of the significance of the Passover I believe this is enough to show that the Passover is NOT completely fulfilled, and it is certainly not an out-of-date festival. I personally look forward to the fourth cup and as my family and I celebrate the Passover each year it is a great source of joy for us to remember the hope of our Lord's second coming. I pray that this may spark some interest into the other Jewish Festivals as each one is very significant. Jesus was the Passover Lamb on the very day of Passover. As you will also see, He was then buried bread on the exact day of Unleavened Bread. He became the first fruits on the exact day of First fruits. The Holy Spirit was given on the exact day of Pentecost (The Jewish festival called Shavuot). It only stands to reason that the Fall feasts have future significance, as I believe the Scriptures indicate as well.

FIRSTFRUITS

To continue with the Spring feasts we see that Leviticus 23:10-11 describes the feast of firstfruits where the priest was to wave a sheaf of grain before the LORD as an offering to God. In other words, the firstfruits of the harvest belonged to God (Deut 26:1-2). The word Sheaf is something like a heap of grain. If sheaf represents a person, it would stand to reason that sheaves would represent people. In Psalm 126:6 we read of a prophecy, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless *come again* with rejoicing, *bringing his sheaves with Him*." This is what we see in Jude as well, that when the Lord returns He will bring "thousands upon thousands of His holy ones" with him. Who are these firstfruit sheaves? Paul tells us, "But now *Christ is risen* from the dead, and *has become the firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20). This is confirmed in Acts where we read, "that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts 26:23). The Scriptures tell us that Jesus was the firstborn of Mary (Mat 1:23), first and only begotten of God (Heb 1:6), firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15), firstborn of the dead (Rev 1:5, Acts 26:23), firstborn of many brothers (Rom 8:29), and the firstfruits of the resurrected (1 Cor 15:14-23).

The firstfruit offering was representative of the whole harvest and a pledge of trust that the rest of the harvest would indeed come by the hand of God's providence. In other words, Christ's resurrection was only the first of a great harvest to come. Jesus said, "The harvest is truly great, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2). As Christians, we are part of this harvest. Let's see how this feast was played out at the time of Christ.

Following the incredible fulfillment of God's Passover, the High Priest would go into seclusion for the next three days not to be seen or touched by anyone. When these days were

over he then went to offer the first fruit offering to God in the temple. Likewise, Jesus was in the secluded grave for three days, and upon rising, told Mary not to handle Him because He had not yet ascended to the Father (John 20:17). Just as the priest was to make the first fruit offering, Jesus was that offering, “So in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: *Christ, the first fruits*; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him” (1 Cor 15:22-23). Not only was Christ the first fruit Himself but He also offered the believers to His father as first fruits as well. Revelation says, “They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb” (Rev 14:4, see also James 1:18). Can you see why these are not to be called the Jewish festivals because they were not just for the Jews. They only came to the Jew first.

In Matthew we read, “The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people” (Mat 27:51-53). Often times people read this thinking that dead people came out their graves when Jesus died, however, read carefully, it was after Jesus’ resurrection that this took place. Why? To answer this question we must look at a parable that Jesus told that I believe wasn’t a parable at all, but a real historical event. Jesus said, “There was a certain rich man. . . And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table . . . the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell [hadee] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. . . between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us” (Luke 16:19-26). In no other parable does Jesus use the real name of a person. It is always, there once was a rich man or a king etc., yet here He says there was a man named Lazarus. Also, in the Old Testament when people died they all went to a place called “*Sheol*” (Ps 16:10). This was the place of the dead. According the Vines Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words it was the “Place of reward for the righteous (Hos 13:14; cf. 1 Cor 15:55. Jesus’ teaching in Luke 16:19-31 seems to reflect accurately the Old Testament concept of *sheol* . . . one side of which is occupied by the suffering, unrighteous dead separated by a great chasm from the other side peopled by the righteous dead enjoying their reward.” In other words, *sheol* was a divided into two sections, one for the righteous and one for the unrighteous. This is why Lazarus went to Abraham’s bosom. Keep in mind, without Jesus coming, people couldn’t go to God’s bosom, that is only something Christ was able to bring about.

Let’s take this thought a bit further. In Ephesians 4:8 we see of Jesus, “When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men.” KJV says Christ let captivity captive. Who are these people in captivity? I am going to suggest that these are those righteous men who had died in the Old Testament and had gone to the bosom of Abraham. When Jesus died, He went to *sheol* as Peter tells us “He went and preached [literally proclaimed his victory] to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago in the days of Noah when the Ark was being built.” (1 Peter 3). Not only did He proclaim His victory to those in the lower parts of *sheol*, but He then took those in the upper part of *sheol* and led those captives free and took them to His father as part of the firstfruit offering of the harvest. This is what Ephesians may be talking of when it states, “He led captives in His train.” This is also why Matthew told us that at

Christ's resurrection, the dead came out of their graves and appeared to people in Jerusalem. They were the firstfruits of the harvest.

SHAVUOT (HEBREW) OR PENTECOST (GREEK)

Leviticus 23:15-16 continues to tell Israel to celebrate the next feast by counting up 50 days. Counting is something done in anticipation of an event to come. However, normally we count down to an exciting event, yet here we count up. Why? It is very possible that the Jews couldn't understand the excitement of what was to come because they were not spiritually ready to receive it. They would need to rehearse this and learn over time. In fact, God waited 50 days after the Jews left Egypt before he gave them the Torah (Law). Why didn't He give it to them in Egypt? Because God could take the people out of Egypt, but He didn't take Egypt out of the people. It is similar to when you go to a conference where you learn and see all kinds of exciting things. You come home all pumped up to share what you have learned, but a week or two later, the excitement has faded and you are back in your old ways again. God wanted to test them make their faith stable, not moving up and down based on miracles.

Spiritually it was important because This countup began on the day the first omer of barley was harvested. Traditionally, the Jews see this time as a period of spiritual introspection to prepare themselves for the coming festival of Shavuot when the barley harvest would end and the wheat harvest would begin. Because the counting of the omer is the time that Israel left Egypt and then waited for 50 days to receive the Law at Mount Sinai, it is a time to remember this event and reflect upon our being led into a new life and out of spiritual Egypt. It is also a time of preparation to receive the gifts God has for you. As believers in the Lord Jesus, we know this is a time to remember Jesus resurrection because all of Christ's post-resurrection appearances and ascension took place within these days of counting the omer. It was on the first day of the counting that Jesus appeared to Mary (Miriam) and the two on the road to Emmaus (John 20:18-19). On the ninth day of counting he appeared to Thomas (John 20:26). (See also 1 Cor 15:6-7, John 21:1-3). On the 40th day of the omer counting we read, "To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Fathers, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me." (Acts 1:3-4). In verse nine we see that he then ascended into heaven. After that the disciples would have continued counting the omer, 41, 42, 43 and so on until that glorious day of Pentecost when they were gathered together in prayer and the Holy Spirit was given on the 50th day (Acts 2:2-3). Before His resurrection Jesus even told the disciples to wait for an important day in Jerusalem. Pentecost was that day of which Jesus said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5).

In Deuteronomy 16:16 we see that Shavuot, or the Feast of Weeks as it is called, was one of the three festivals in which all of Israel was commanded to go to Jerusalem to celebrate. (Other two are Passover and Tabernacles). The details of this festival are described further in

Leviticus 23:17-21. This is why when Pentecost came there were people from every nation there in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-5).

Again, it was not just any time of day that the Spirit was given, but it was the time of the morning sacrifice, or the third hour according to Acts 2:15. This would have been the exact time that the priest would have been waving the offering prescribed in Leviticus 23:20-21. Not only that but we see the number of souls added to the kingdom that day were 3000 (Acts 2:41). It spread like wild fire because by Acts 4:4 the number had increased to 5000, by Acts 21:20 there were tens of thousands of Jews who had believed.

There is another connection here to the Old Testament. We have seen how the Jews left Egypt at Passover and received the law 50 days later (Exo 19:1). Let's look at what happened from the book of Exodus: "And it came to pass on the third day *in the morning*, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet *exceeding loud*; so that all the people that was in the camp tremble. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD *descended upon it in fire*" (Ex 19:16-18). Notice that this was in the morning and there was a loud noise (as in Acts 2:2-3), and fire. When Moses later comes down the mountain, he sees the golden calf and 3000 men die that day (Ex 32:28-29), just as at Pentecost years later, 3000 are saved. In other words, at the giving of the law 3000 perish and at the giving of the Spirit 3000 are saved.

Since it is the Spirit that is the focus of Shavuot, let us see what Ezekiel experienced with the Spirit of God: "Then the Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a *great rushing*, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from His place. I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a *noise of a great rushing* (Eze 3:12-13). God told Ezekiel, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And *I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them*" (Eze 36:26-27). So what the purpose of this Spirit being given? The Spirit would cause you to walk in God's statutes and keep His judgments! The very point of Pentecost was to cause us to want to obey God, not feel like we had to obey Him. The Spirit didn't get rid of the law, it only made us understand it properly and recognize that Jesus had taken away the condemnation of it. We have seen how the absolute divine symbolism and purpose of this feast is seen in Acts 2 when that day arrived and 3,000 people were saved. Again, this is in stark contrast to when the law was given on Mount Sinai and 3,000 people were killed (Exo 32:28). Since the law was given on the Feast of Shavuot the Ten Commandments are read as part of this feast. For the Messianic Jew, however, they realize that the law was put on the heart through the Holy Spirit. As the Scriptures say, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:6). This was the day God put the law into the hearts of men through the Holy Spirit as Jeremiah said, "'This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,' declares the LORD. 'I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people'" (Jer 31:33). Therefore, this feast marks the giving of the law, once on stone, and once on hearts of flesh. The first time it killed and the second time it saved. Hallelujah. One can not read Psalm 119 without seeing we are to love God's law. Please take the time to read that chapter now.

Understanding the harvests helps us to see other details within the Scriptures. In the Book of Ruth we see that “She kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of the barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law” (Ru 2:23). The Barley Harvest was always around Passover and the wheat harvest, which came later, was always around Shavuot. Ruth means “friend” and she certainly became a friend of Israel and worked the harvest. Orpah, on the other hand, turned her back on Israel and went back to her gods. Both were Gentiles, one was a friend and other was not. Both women can represent the end times church, whereas we can be a friend of Israel and work the harvest by the Spirit of God, or we can turn our back on them as Orpah did. Keep in mind that even Paul, a preacher to the Gentiles, always went to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. Despite this example, we today keep witnessing to the Gentile and ignore the Jew, unless of course they come to us. Is this Biblical evangelism?

OBJECTIONS:

Before we go any further, I know many have already heard a number of objections for New Testament Christians to celebrate the feasts of the Lord. Let's examine a few of these. Many use Col 2:16-17 to say we are finished with festivals. It states, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body *is* of Christ." First of all, I have no argument that these are a shadow of things to come. As we said, the Bible calls them rehearsals, however, as we have also seen in Passover, it isn't completely fulfilled yet because Jesus is coming back for the fourth cup. Secondly, if you notice in this verse the word "is" is italicized in the KJV. Why? This is what the KJV does to show that that word is not in the original language. Therefore, the verse should read, "Let no man judge you [in these matters] but the body of Christ."

A second objection comes from Galatians 4:8-11, "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God-or rather are known by God- how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you." There are many problems with this. If this was a valid objection, would not the celebration of Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving etc also be observing special days? Why would we only include Passover, Firstfruits etc? Also, if Paul was telling us not to observe these festivals, why did Paul and Jesus observe them? It isn't the observance that is the problem, it is the mindset of the observance that Paul was objecting to. If you are making these a means of salvation and are "enslaved" by them, by all means you are in the wrong. However, if you are observing them as rehearsals to enlighten you of the Lord's plan, they are a blessing. Finally, Paul was talking to Gentile Galatians who also had pagan rituals and festivals. It is most likely that Paul was referring to those festivals that they "formerly" were caught up in before they knew God.

Because of Scripture like the above verse, many say that Paul was against the law and these festivals. Nothing was further from the truth and Paul even went out of his way to prove that was not what he was saying. In Acts 21 we read, "They said to Paul: 'You see, brother, how many thousands of *Jews have believed*, and all of them are *zealous for the law*. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who lie among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, *telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs*. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that *you yourself are living in obedience to the law*'" (Acts 21:20-25). Paul wasn't telling them to abandon their customs, he was simply showing them that salvation was in Christ, not the law, yet Paul loved and obeyed the Law. He even said, "Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:8). In other words, keep the feasts with Christ in focus. We have heard the WWJD (What would Jesus do) phrase. In reality, we should ask, WDJD (What did Jesus do).

YOM TERUAH (FEAST OF TRUMPETS) A TIME OF REPENTANCE

This day is very significant for a many reasons. The details are described in Leviticus 23:1-2 but we see other traditions by examining the Jewish practices as well. Traditionally, it is believed that it was on this day that the world was created because the first word in Genesis is *Berasheet* (in the beginning). This portion of Scripture reversed indicates the first of Tishri, (our September or October) which is the date this festival begins. As a result, this is the time of the Jewish new year. According to Ezra 3:1-6 we can see that this was the time in which Ezra restarted the altar sacrifice after the Babylonian captivity. It was also the date in which Nehemiah read the Law after this captivity as well (Neh 7:2). In fact, if you do a concordance search for the seventh month, you will see this is a time marking many important events Biblically.

Tabernacles is also viewed as a day of remembrance because according to the Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 10b), this was the time Sarah and Hannah were conceived. Of course the Bible does not indicate this, however, it is Jewish tradition. Tradition also has it that this is when the flood waters of Noah dried up, the day Enoch went to heaven and the day Joseph was freed.

In addition to creation and remembrance Yom Teruah is perhaps most importantly viewed as a time of judgment. According to the Talmud Rosh Hashanah, the Jews believe God has three books which will be opened on this day, the book of Righteousness, book of the wholly wicked, and a book of intermediates who have ten days to repent. We will explain the significance of this as we go, but to understand it is a time of judgment will suffice for now.

This holiday is a two day celebration which begins 30 days early in the month of Elul at the sighting of the new moon. We see that Ezra observed two days in Nehemiah 8:2-3:13. With the normal ten days of this festival from the 1st to the 10th of the month and adding the 30 days before during the month of Elul, you get a 40 day season called *Teshuvah*, which means to return or repent. The number 40 throughout the Scriptures has been seen as a time of testing. There are the 40 days of Ninevah, 40 days Moses went up the mountain after the golden calf, 40 days the spies went into Canaan, 40 years of desert wandering, 40 days of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness. In other words, these 40 days are viewed as a period to reflect upon ones sins and turn away from them. These last ten days of this festival are called the Days of Awe and they end on Tishri 10, or the beginning of the next festival which is the Day of Atonement.

A key element to this festival is the blowing of trumpets. Biblically we see that trumpets were blown to bring Moses up on Mount Sinai (Ex 19:19-20), to signal war (Judges 3:27), to begin the Jubilee year (Lev 25:9), for the coronation of kings (1 Kings 1:34), to regather dispersed Israel (Isa 27:13), to warn of danger (Amos 3:6), and to announce the Messiah's arrival (Zeck 9:14). In fact, Zechariah tells us that "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and *happy festivals* for Judah, therefore love *truth* and peace'" (Ze 8:18). While now it is celebrated as a fast and time of repentance, a day is coming when it will be a time of joy. Biblically, it seems that this is the time in which the Lord will return for a second time, therefore, one would do well to know more of this festival, however, satan has blinded many in the church to the truth that is shown in this rehearsal. God has warned us that this would happen as well. In Daniel 7 we read of the Antichrist, "He shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws" (Dan 7:25). I used to wonder how anyone could change times. The Hebrew word here for "times" is *zemawn* which is an appointed time or occasion. In other words, satan is going to try and change an appointed time and the laws of God. We can't say for sure what this is, however, it is interesting that without the Biblical festivals, which are appointed times, one will not understand what the Lord is telling us to rehearse for. The modern church typically has no understanding of these things and has replaced them with Christmas, Easter, Halloween etc., at different times of the year and have neglected God's law. Is it possible we are missing out on something here? To answer this question we must look further.

We read, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month, in the first day of the month [1st of Tishri], shall ye have a sabbath, a *memorial* of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation'" (Lev 23:23-24). What is this to be a memorial of? The Hebrew word for memorial is *zawkar* and means "to be mindful of."

God is telling us to do this to be mindful of Him and *He will remember us* because God remembers His own. Consider the following:

- “But He shall say, I tell you, *I know you not* whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity” (Luke 13:27).
- “And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall *blow an alarm with the trumpets*; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies” (Numbers 10:9).
- ¹⁶ Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a *book of remembrance* was written before him *for them that feared the LORD*, and that thought upon His name. ¹⁷ And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels^f; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. ¹⁸ Then shall ye return, and *discern between the righteous and the wicked*, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. (Mal 3:16-18).

The blowing of the trumpets on this day is a command of God for us to remember Him as He remember us. “And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no work: it is a day of blowing (*teruwah*) the trumpets unto you” (Num 29:1). We are to recognize this sound as we rehearse it. When a Jew hears this sound, there are Biblical ideas that come to mind. When a Christian hears them, it means nothing yet the following verses indicate that God has meaning to the *teruwah*:

- “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle” (1 Cor 14:8).
- The Psalmists says, “*God is gone up with a shout (teruwah) the LORD with sound of a trumpet*” (Ps 47:5).
- “For the Lord Himself *shall descend from heaven with a shout*, with the voice of the archangel, and *with the trump of God*: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thes 4:16).
- “And the LORD shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the LORD God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south” (Zec 9:14).
- “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound (*teruwah*)” (Ps 89:15).

I would say God has given an indication of what we are rehearsing!

When we read the Bible there are many indications that Yom Teruah will mark what is called the “Time of Jacob’s trouble.” Keep this in mind as we look at the following verses:

- “The *great day of the LORD is near, it is near*, and hasteth greatly, *even the voice of the day of the LORD*: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. ¹⁵ That day *is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness*, ¹⁶ *A day of the trumpet [LITERALLY, YOM TERUAH]* and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers” (ZEPH 1:14).
- “Ask ye now, and see whether a man^b doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, *as a woman in travail*, and all faces are turned into paleness? ⁷

Alas! *for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble*; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer 30:6-7).

- "Like as a *woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery*, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD" (Isa 26:17).
- "Howl ye; for the *day of the LORD is at hand*; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. ⁷ Therefore shall all hands be faint^b, and every man's heart shall melt: ⁸ And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they *shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth*: they shall be amazed^c one at another; their faces *shall be as flames*" (Isa 13:6).
- "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there *shall be a time of trouble*, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time *thy people shall be delivered*, every one that shall be found *written in the book*" (Dan 12:1).
- For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows" [Greek indicates birth pains] (Mat 24:7-8).
- "*Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?*"

Earlier I mentioned that Ezra celebrated this festival for two days after the return from Babylon. Why? It fell on the first day of the new moon and they wanted everyone to know it, even those still in Babylon. Therefore, the two days were regarded as one long day to make sure all could participate. Because two witnesses had to see the new moon and there were two days, it consequently became known as the Feast in which know one would know the day or the hour, but the general time frame was indeed known. Therefore, when Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour of His return, the Jews would have clearly understood this as a reference to the Feast of Yom Teruah. As you will see in the following paragraphs, the Scriptures do indicate that this as well.

One may think that the Lord is coming like a thief in the night and, therefore, an appointed feast could not point to Christ's second coming. However, we must understand that He is not coming as a thief to believers, only to the lost. When people tell me we can't know the time the Lord is returning I only have to tell them to read the next verse. "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have *no need that I write unto you*. [in other words, you should already know]² For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so *cometh as a thief* in the night. ³ For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ ***But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*** ⁵ Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: *we are not of the night, nor of darkness*" (1 Thes 5:1-5). It is interesting that the Jews viewed high priest in Old Testament times as a thief in the night. The reason for this was that if he ever found the temple priests that were on guard at night sleeping, he would take some coals out of the fire from the altar and lay them on the garments of the man not doing his job. This would naturally begin to burn and start the clothing on fire. Needless to say, one did not want to be found sleeping. This is the picture Jews would have understood when reading the following verses:

- “Behold, *I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments*, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev 16:15).
- “And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. ² *Be watchful*, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. *If therefore thou shalt **not** watch, I will come on thee as a thief*, and *thou shalt not know* what hour I will come upon thee” (Rev 3:1-3).
- “And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out^a. ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹³ *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh*” (Mat 25:8-13).
- “Blessed *are* those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall *find watching*: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and *make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them [will be shown in feast of tabernacles]*. ³⁸ And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them so*, blessed are those servants. ³⁹ And this know, that *if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched*, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. ⁴⁰ Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? ⁴² And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season? ⁴³ Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. ⁴⁴ Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. ⁴⁵ But and *if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming*; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; ⁴⁶ *The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his *portion with the unbelievers*” (Luke 12:37-46).
- “When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the sky is red. ³ And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times” (Mat 16:3)?
- “For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, ⁴⁴ And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; *because thou knewest not* the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:43-44).

It is not difficult to see that we are to be found watching so that this darkness spoke of at *Yom Teruah* will not overtake us (Zeph 1:14). We are told to watch which indicates there will be signs and warnings that give us an idea of when the Lord will return. God would not tell us to watch, if there was nothing to take note of. Every time the feast of *Yom Teruah* is celebrated, it is

a warning that the Lord is returning. This is why it is a time of repentance and preparation for the feasts yet to come. There are many verses that warn us to sound and hear the trumpet, but the following are a few examples:

- Ezekiel wrote, “Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: ³ If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, *he blow the trumpet*, and warn the people; ⁴ Then *whosoever^a heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning*; if the sword come, and take him away, *his blood shall be upon his own head*. ⁵ He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. . . .⁷ So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt ***hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me***”. (Eze 33:2-7).
- To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? . . . I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together:. . . Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*. ¹⁷ Also I set *watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet*. But they said, We will not hearken” (Jer 6:10-17).
- “Cry aloud, spare not, *lift up thy voice like a trumpet*, and show *My people their transgression*, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Is 58:1).

It is also believed by the Jew, and supported Scripturally, that the day of *Yom Teruah* (day of blowing) is a day of awakening from the dead. Consider these verses:

- “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2). The question is when will they awake?
- “Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Is 26:19). Again, when will this happen?
- Here lies the answer, “For the Lord Himself *shall descend from heaven with a shout*, with the voice of the archangel, and *with the trump of God*: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thes 4:16).
- Also, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump*: for the *trumpet shall sound*, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1Cor 15:51).

I see no way we can question that the dead will rise when the last trumpet is blown. What is the last trumpet? To begin this festival, the priest would be watching for the sliver of the moon. When he saw it he would take his trumpet and blow it on the southwestern parapet of the Temple. At this time, anyone working in the fields would immediately stop working and would go right to a worship service at which 100 trumpets would be sounded. These trumpets were to

announce the setting up of the eternal court. The final trumpet would announce the court room being seated. According to Jewish tradition, the first court date was for those who had their names written in the Book of Life. (The dead in Christ rise first according to 1 Thess 4:16). In Judaism it is believed that the Lord looks over each persons account in this 10 day trial to see how he has handled his spiritual investments. In other words, your life is placed on a scale to be weighed. The ten days gives people time to get things in order (repentance) before the books are closed and judgment is placed on the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement, which comes ten days later, was believed to be the second court date for all the ungodly to be judged. There can be no question that there is a day of judgment coming and the Scriptures support this idea:

- “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad” (2 Cor 5:10).
- “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor 3:13-15).
- “A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the *judgment was set*, and the *books were opened*. [notice plural books]¹¹ I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” (Dan 7:10-11).
- “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; ¹² Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. ¹³ And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Rev 5:11). Reading this chapter we see a clear courtroom scene taking place.
- “And I saw a great *white throne*, [judgment seat] and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the *books* were opened: and *another book* was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev 20:11-12).
- “After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it *were of a trumpet talking with me*; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. ² And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, *a throne was set in heaven*, and *one* sat on the throne” (Rev 4:1-2). This is preparation for the seal judgments.

These ten days were also a period of protection for those found righteous in God’s eyes. All the rabbis taught that the resurrection took place on the feast of *Yom Teruah* as the New

Testament clearly showed in previous pages. It was also at this time that the rabbis believed that the righteous would enter the wedding canopy (*chupah*) for seven years while the day of Jacob's trouble would occur on earth. We will discuss this wedding canopy shortly, but first let's examine this idea of entering a canopy of protection as referenced many times in the Bible as well:

- “Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; ² *Before* the decree bring forth, *before* the day pass as the chaff, *before* the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, *before* the day of the LORD’S anger come upon you. ³ Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought *His judgment*; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye ***shall be hid*** in the day of the LORD’S anger” (Zeph 2:1).
- “For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock” (Ps 27:5).
- “Come, My people, *enter thou into Thy chambers*, and shut thy doors about thee: *hide thyself* as it were for a little moment, *until the indignation be overpast*. ²¹ For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place *to punish the inhabitants of the earth* for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain” (Isa 26:20).

JEWISH WEDDING

Since Judaism claimed that it was at *Yom Teruah* that the righteous are taken into this *chupah* we must examine this a bit further as well. In a Jewish wedding, one would get betrothed, which is similar to our engagement, but a bit more serious. This betrothal is called *Erusin* and later called *Kiddushin* once the woman accepts the offer. Keep in mind that marriages were arranged by the parents, typically the father of the household. Normally, the first thing a man would do is to go to father of the bride to be with three items: money, contract, and wine. One would certainly not show up with a small amount of money because if you offered \$50.00 for a man's daughter, it would be an insult as if you were saying that is all she is worth. If the father accepted the bride price, the man could then consult the woman by presenting a betrothal contract. If the woman accepted the contract, a glass of wine was poured and she would drink from the cup and the contract became legal. At this point they were considered husband and wife, yet they were not yet married. We see a beautiful picture of this in Genesis 24 where Abraham arranges a marriage for his son Isaac. The servant took a large sum of money and jewels as a bride price where upon Rebekah had to make a decision to go with the servant (Gen 24:58). We also see that Joseph was considered to be Mary's husband when they were merely betrothed (Mat 1:18-19). Well how does this picture fit our relationship with Christ?

God the Father has indeed arranged a marriage for us. It is God who sent His Son and chose us to be His. As His Son came for us, He paid a great price. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet 1:18-19). Also, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor 6:20). There could be no greater price than that which Christ paid for us. We read in Hosea, "And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. ²⁰ I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD" (Hos 2:19-20). Normally, there was a written document called the *Ketubah*, which stated the bride price, promises of the groom, and the rights of the bride. God has given us this *Ketubah* in the Bible.

Next, the bride had to accept the offer just as the Bible indicates we must do. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom 10:8-10).

Gifts were then given to the bride upon her acceptance and the cup of the covenant was drunk. Paul says, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ⁸ Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph 4:7-8). Also, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (1 Cor 12:1). The cup of the covenant was clearly seen in the Passover celebration when we take the cup of the new covenant.

From this point on, the woman would then spend her time preparing herself to live as a wife and mother in Israel. She would learn how to please her husband and wait for his return. Meanwhile, the husband would go to his own father's house and prepare a place called a chamber for her. These are the very words Jesus told us, "I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if

I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also” (John 14:1).

If anyone would ask the groom when the wedding would be, he would answer, “Only my father knows” because it was the father who had to give the okay in that everything had been completed before he could go get his bride. Jesus said, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mar 13:32).

When all was finished, the groom would return accompanied by a shout and the shofar was blown. Typically, this was done at night when the lamps were kept burning. Yet in Matthew we read, “And at midnight there was a cry made. Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps” (Mat 25:6-7).

From this point the groom would steal away his bride and take her to the chamber where the marriage would be consummated while the Father announced the marriage. At the end of this seven day period, the couple would emerge from the chamber and partake of a great wedding feast that had been prepared. (keep in mind that the Feast of Tabernacles will be 7 days long as well) This is referenced for us many times:

- “For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, *so* shall thy sons marry thee: and *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, *so* shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isa 62:5).
- “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath *made herself ready*. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white^a: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. ⁹ And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev 19:7-9).

Let us not be like those who found excuses not to go to the wedding:

- “A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: ¹⁷ And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. ¹⁸ And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. ¹⁹ And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. ²⁰ And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. ²¹ So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. ²² And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. ²³ And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper” (Luke 14:16-24).
- “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ³ And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ⁴ Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage. ⁵ But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew

them. ⁷ But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸ Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. ⁹ Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. ¹¹ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹² And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. ¹³ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹⁴ For many are called, but few *are* chosen” (Mat 22:1-14).

Finally, *Yom Teruah* is also seen as the time for coronation of kings, thus it is viewed as the time God will be crowned as our King. According to Jewish eschatology, the Lord will return after 6000 years of history. At that time the Lord will open the doors of heaven on the Feast of Trumpets and close them on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). Trumpets were often blown to reaffirm ones sovereignty and kingship. We see this referenced in Psalms, “With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King. ⁷ Let the sea roar, and the fullness^a thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. ⁸ Let the floods clap *their* hands: let the hills be joyful together ⁹ Before the LORD; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity” (Ps 98:6-9). It was no accident that it was a regular practice for the Kings of Israel to be enthroned on the 1st of Tishri. It is also no accident that we see a connection of the trumpets being blown at the time of this enthronement. We see in Revelation, “*A door was opened in heaven*: [just as Jews say happens on *Yom Teruah*] and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. ² And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. ³ . . . And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever” (Rev 4:1-3,9). The same is seen in what is called the Coronation Psalm of Psalm 47 where we see that our King chooses His inheritance (v. 4), goes up with a shout and a sound of a trumpet (v. 5), is praised and is seated on a throne (v. 6-8), and gathers His people (v. 9). All these things are expected to take place on this great festival of *Yom Teruah*.

Before leaving this festival, it is also important to see that Jesus celebrated *Yom Teruah* while He walked this earth. It was around this time that Jesus was baptized and then spent 40 days in the wilderness. At this time He pronounced, “Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mat 4:17). I don’t believe it is a coincidence that the time period was 40 days and the theme was that of repentance.

So far we have seen that at Passover, Christ was our individual sacrifice, at Firstfruits, He became our living and resurrected Lord, at Pentecost He gave us His Spirit and at Trumpets, He will return again to collect what He left as a “Deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of His glory” (Eph 1:14, see also 2 Tim 1:14).

DAY OF ATONEMENT OR YOM KIPPUR

The next rehearsal was to begin on the 10th of Tishri, the ending day of *Yom Teruah* (Lev 23:27). These festivals are connected just as the spring festivals were which suggests the events that are foreshadowed will take place quickly and chronologically. This day was the most solemn day of the year when you were to “afflict your souls” (Lev 23:32). It is mentioned in the Scriptures as the “fast” and can be seen in Acts where we read, “Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was no dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them” (Act 27:9). It is during this time that the Jews would wear a *Kitel*, which is a white robe worn for purity. In essence, this Yom Kippur is foreshadowing judgment day and believers can wear white because it is the blood of Jesus which makes us clean. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Is 1:18). We also see in Revelation, “His wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white^a: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev 19:7). Clearly, once the time of repentance and judgment of the saints is over at *Yom Teruah* we are given white clothes to wear because of the blood of Jesus.

Before we dive into the details too much, I would like to revisit the historical significance of this day. In Exodus 19:1 we see that Israel came to Mount Sinai to receive the Law on *Shavuot* or *Pentecost*. After that there are a series of events of Moses coming and going until chapter 24 we see Moses being called up the mountain again for 40 days and nights (24:1, 18) during which time he is given the instructions about the Tabernacle, offerings and feasts (Ex 25-31). When he comes down 40 days later we see the golden calf event in chapter 32. After this it says, “on the morrow,” meaning the next day, Moses went up the mountain for 40 more days to “make an atonement” (v. 30) for the sins of the people committed by the golden calf. Moses says to God, “If Thou wilt forgive their sin - - and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book” (Exo 32:31-33). Keep in mind it is believed that during the 40 day period of repentance during *Yom Teruah* (from Elul 1 to Tishri 10) books are opened for judgment. It is believed that Moses came down the mountain this second time on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) after making atonement for the people. What Moses did foreshadowed what Christ would do later. We had broken God’s commands and Christ stepped in to mediate for us. If this indeed was Yom Kippur, as Jews suggest, when Moses came down the mountain with national atonement, it easily could foreshadow the Day of Atonement (Judgment Day) to come when our Mediator will pronounce us righteous. This is why the Scriptures tell us that our Lamb has taken away our sins (John 1:29, Ps 103:12, Mic 7:19).

It is on this holiest day of the year (10th of Tishri) that the holiest man would go into the holiest place to proclaim the holiest Name. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. On this day he would say the name YHWH (Yahweh) ten times and the people would bow down and worship each time. There were 8 garments worn on this special day as well: 1) gold crown, 2) breastplate, 3) outer pomegranate decorated robe, 4) apron, 5) white garment 6) belt 7) turban and 8) pants. There was also a bull that was sacrificed for the priest and the people while *incense was burned with coals from the altar*. The incense would

cause a large amount of *smoke which would cover the mercy seat* from full view. Some of the blood from the sacrifice was poured out on the altar and some on the ground by the altar. In all, there were 43 trips between the altar and the sanctuary on this holy day. According to Leviticus 16:3 it was to be a “sabbath of solemn rest” where you were to “*afflict your souls*” and it was to be a “statute forever.” Once the ten days of Repentance concluded with the close of *Yom Teruah*, the *Viddui* (confession of sins) would begin and an immersion or baptism of repentance. The *Viddui* was repeated ten times as the priest would pronounce YHWH to invoke divine pardon for their sins. On this day everything closes down and it is the only fast day that is not postponed if it coincides with the Sabbath. It is also the only day of the year where people who were previously barred from the synagogue would be welcomed back if forgiveness was desired. Traditionally, all boys 13 years old and girls 12 years old have a mandatory fast as well, and there is no entertainment allowed. The festival begins at sundown with the *Kol Nidre* (evening service meaning “all vows”). They would sing a very sorrowful melody and ask for forgiveness for breaking vows. Participants *wear white* to show their sins have been made white as snow (Is 1:18). When the fast is over they begin building a *sukkah* for the next festival of Booths or Tabernacles.

The Messianic Significance of the Day of Atonement is in the sacrifice of Jesus. We read in Romans, “God presented Him as a *sacrifice of atonement*, through faith in His blood” (Rom 3:25). Likewise, in Hebrews we see “Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come. . not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb 9:11-13). There can be no question that Jesus was not only the sacrifice, but our High Priest who opened up the way of heaven to us for the Most Holy Place was symbolic of God’s throne. Christ made it possible for all to enter His throne room through His blood. This is why when Jesus died, the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was torn in two. The priest had to wear “Holy to the Lord” on his turban, and this is exactly what Christ has made us.

There were also two goats that were selected for this festival. Lots were cast so that the one goat became the scape goat and the other one was sacrificed. We see that Jesus was put to death but also rose from the dead to free us. Interestingly, the Jews record in the Talmud that there was a miracle that took place every year at this time. A red cloth was tied around the neck of the scapegoat. The priest would lay his hands on the head of the goat, symbolizing the sins of all the people being placed upon that goat, and then it was led out into the wilderness where it was thrown over a cliff to make sure the sins could never find them again. Each year, the red cloth would turn white as it was led out into the wilderness. Later, this same red cloth was hung up in the temple, and it too, turned white. However, the Talmud records that 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD there were 4 ominous events that took place. First, this miracle of the red cloth turning white stopped happening. Second, the lot for the Lord’s goat would come up in the left hand, whereas it always came up in the right hand before. Third, the westernmost light on the Temple Menorah would not stay lit. Fourth, the temple doors (which were so large that one man couldn’t open them) would open up by themselves. If you do the math, all of this was happening at the time that Jesus was sacrificed. You would think that this would make a Jew stop and consider Jesus as the Messiah, however, the rabbis say the miracle stopped happening because too many people followed this false messiah. Ironically, they even

used the verse in Zechariah as a reason for the doors to be opening, “Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars” (Zech 11:1). Instead of seeing the complete truth, they reasoned that this verse was simply predicting the coming of the Roman army.

Blood was the focus of this festival, because it was blood that was given for atonement. Blood is the price of the New Covenant (Acts 20:28, Mat 26:27-28, 1 Cor 11:25), it gives eternal life (John 6:53-54), brings redemption (Eph 1:7), cleanses (1 John 1:7), and allows us to overcome (Rev 12:11). There are many verses that could be used to illustrate this vital foundation of Christianity but the following will have to suffice:

- “For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. ⁵ Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared Me: ⁶ In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin Thou hast had no pleasure” (Heb 10:4-6). Atonement literally means to cover. The blood of the animals could only cover our sins until the better blood of Jesus could take them away.
- “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; ⁷ None of *them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: ⁸ (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)” (Ps 49:6-8). We could never cover or get rid of our sins on our own.
- “If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him” (1 Sam 2:25)? Only Jesus could take away our sins.

The biggest difference between Passover and Atonement is that Passover was for individuals, but this sacrifice was for the nation of Israel corporately. Let’s examine a few Scriptures and see how they relate to Yom Kippur and end times:

- “Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the *tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement* shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. ¹⁰ And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family” (Lev 25:9-10). Here we see this was the time to proclaim freedom for every slave and return all property to its original owner. When the Lord returns, He will set all His children free and the land He gave to Abraham will be theirs forever when He judges in favor of His people.
- “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, *and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn*” (Isa 61:1-2). Jesus read this verse in the synagogue but notice a small difference: “‘The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to *proclaim freedom* for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to *proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor*.’ Then He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on Him, ²¹ and He began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’” (Luke

4:18-21). Note, however, He stopped half way through the second verse and did not say “the day of vengeance” because this was not being fulfilled when Christ came the first time. This would be for His second coming which will be at the Day of Atonement. It is believed by Messianic Jews that Jesus read this verse on the Day of Atonement as well, simply because they could only pronounce the “acceptable year of the Lord” on this special day. It was this festival that God would open and close the book and this is also what Yeshua did here. What was the result of Jesus saying these things were fulfilled in their presence? “All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁹ They got up, *drove Him out of the town*, and took Him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to *throw him down the cliff*. (Luke 4:28-30). Notice, that they were going to throw Jesus, our scapegoat, over a cliff. This is exactly what they did with the Scapegoat in the wilderness.

- Note the similarities of the Day of Atonement and Revelation: “And he shall take a ***censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar*** before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the vail: ¹³ And he shall ***put the incense upon the fire before the LORD***, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not: ¹⁴ And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger ***seven times***. ¹⁵ Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat. . . And there shall ***be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement*** in the holy *place*, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and ***for all the congregation of Israel.***” (Lev 16:12-15). Now in Revelation we read, “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a ***golden censer***; and there was given unto him ***much incense***, that he should offer^a *it* with the ***prayers of all saints*** upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. ⁵ And the angel took the ***censer, and filled it with fire of the altar***, and cast *it* into^b the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. ⁶ And the ***seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound***” (Rev 8:3-6). “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, ***that they should be judged***, and that thou shouldest ***give reward unto thy servants*** the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth^d. ¹⁹ And the ***temple of God was opened in heaven***, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament” (Rev 11:18-19). “And the ***temple was filled with smoke*** from the glory of God, and from his power; and ***no man was able to enter into the temple***, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (Rev 15:8). “For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for ***he hath judged*** the great whore, . . . And he *was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood*: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, ***clothed in fine linen, white and clean***. ¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he ***treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath*** of Almighty God” (Rev 19:2,13-15, see also Isa 63:1-4). Therefore we see among the judging of Revelation that there is incense being burned,

the smoke fills the temple, fire is taken from the altar, seven angels are used, the wicked are punished and the righteous are rewarded, the temple and access to the Most Holy Place is opened, no man was allowed to go into the Temple until God's job was finished, they were clothed in white and Christ's robe was dipped in blood. All of these

There may be some prophetic significance to this day as well. It is possible that this is the day the nation of Israel will corporately realize that Jesus was their Messiah. When Moses came down the mountain with his face shining, he had to cover his face so people couldn't look upon him. In 2 Corinthians we see why: "We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Cor 3:13-16). The people of Israel were rebellious when Moses came down the mountain and they needed the law. They weren't ready for the grace of God that Moses had experienced. Likewise, until one repents and turns to Christ, that veil will remain. My prayer is that Israel will turn to Christ so that the veil may be removed and they will see Jesus, the Christ (Anointed one).

Keep in mind that it was only on Yom Kippur that the High Priest could see God face to face. In Leviticus 16:2 Moses was to tell Aaron not to enter the Most Holy Place at any other time of year or they would die. This is significant because there is a prophecy in Ezekiel which discusses the reuniting of Israel: "*As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: ³⁴ And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. ³⁵ And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you **face to face***" (Eze 20:33-35). Remember that after Solomon the 12 tribes of Israel were split into two groups, Israel and Judah or the Northern kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. Israel was often called Ephraim and consisted of ten main tribes while Judah consisted of mostly Benjamin and Judah along with some Levites. In 722 BC Ephraim was captured and assimilated into the Assyrian culture, however, there are close to a hundred prophecies telling us that God will join Israel and Judah together again. There is no question that some day the Lord is going to bring scattered Israel back home so that God will "Pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn" (Zech 12:10). This is said to happen in Revelation 1:7. The following are a few of many other verses that may indicate a Jewish revival at the end times:

- "In that day the Lord will reach out His hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of His people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from

the *four quarters of the earth*” (Isa 11:11-12). *Keep in mind that here in chapter seven the angels are coming from the four corners of the earth.*

- ““In that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will break the yoke off their necks and will tear off their bonds; no longer will foreigners enslave them. Instead, they will serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. So do not fear, O Jacob My servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel,’ declares the LORD. ‘I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid’” (Jer 30:8-10).
- “I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be My people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow My laws and be careful to keep My decrees. They will live in the land I gave to My servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David My servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an *everlasting* covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put My *sanctuary among them forever*. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be My people. Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when My sanctuary is among them forever” (Ezek 37:21-28).
- “For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, *without sacrifice* or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to His blessings *in the last days*” (Hosea 3:4-5).
- ““The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when men will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,’ but they will say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where He had banished them.’ For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers’” (Jer 16:15-16).
- “As for you, O house of Israel, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Go and serve your idols, every one of you! But afterward you will surely listen to Me and no longer profane My holy name with your gifts and idols. For on My holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD, there in the land the entire house of Israel will serve Me, and there I will accept them. There I will require your offerings and your choice gifts, along with all your holy sacrifices. I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will show Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations” (Ezek 20:39-41).
- “I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part *until the full number of the Gentiles has come in*. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; He will

turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.' As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and His call are irrevocable.

- "For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, like a great lion to Judah. I will tear them to pieces and go away; I will carry them off, with no one to rescue them. Then *I will go back to My place until they admit their guilt*. And they will seek My face; in their misery they will earnestly seek Me. Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds. After *two days* He will revive us; on the *third day* He will restore us, that we may live in His presence" (Hos 5:14-6:2, see also, Rom 11:15, Jer 31:31-36).

Could this revival take place on Yom Kippur? We can't say for sure, however, there are subtle indications that it is possible. In the above Hosea passage (as well as others) we see that it is when they admit their guilt that this will happen. The KJV says "in their affliction." Both of these terms reflect the situation of Yom Kippur. This is certainly not hard evidence, but time will tell.

In short, this is what we have seen:

Trumpets: The Lord's return at the 7th Trumpet of Revelation and 1 Cor 15:51-52 which says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trumpet*" The included Days of Awe: Time of repentance and the 7 Vials of Revelation and Matthew 24:29 which says, "Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened."

Atonement: Judgment Day and 2 Peter 3:10 "*The day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night, . . . the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be *burned up*" Also, "For we must all appear before the *judgment seat* of Christ" (2 Cor 5:10).

Tabernacle: As we will see, Heaven and the Wedding Banquet of Revelation 19.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES OR BOOTHS (FEAST OF NATIONS, FEAST OF INGATHERING, SUKKOT)

The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) begins on the 15th of Tishri (when Atonement ends) and lasts for seven days. It is described in Leviticus 23:41-43. It was one of the required festivals where everyone had to go to Jerusalem. Today, as in Biblical times, the Jews would build a booth called a *sukkah* (*sukkot* is plural) in which they would spend their days outside of their homes. It was like living in a tent during this festival.

At times it is called the Feast of Nations because as the Day of Atonement is for the nation of Israel, Tabernacles is for all nations. In fact, on the day of Tabernacles, Israel sacrificed 70 bulls, one for each of the 70 nations (Num 29:13-32). The Jew is judged first, then the Gentile as we read in Romans, "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, ⁹ Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that

doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile^a; ¹⁰ But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile” (Rom 2:9-10). We also see that that the Gentile was brought to salvation because of the rejection of the Jew for a time, however, once that time is over, they will be reconciled which brings even more to the Gentile: “For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead” (Rom 11:15)? In other words, salvation come from the Jews rejection but the Lord’s return comes at the Jews being accepted again (Rom 11:23). The feast of the nations is offered to both Jew and Gentile. In fact, when the *sukkah* or booth is built, the Jews often invite strangers into their tent to celebrate with them. This foreshadowed the acceptance of the Gentile into the Jewish covenant.

It is called the Feast of *Sukkot* because people lived in these booths. It is also called the Feast of Ingathering because of its timing. This festival always took place at the grape or fruit harvest. It is very similar to our Thanksgiving. We read, “*Three times thou shalt keep a feast* unto me in the year. ¹⁵ Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: [spring festival at barley harvest] (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) ¹⁶ And the *feast of harvest, the firstfruits* of thy labours, [Summer Pentecost at the wheat harvest] which thou hast sown in the field: and the *feast of ingathering*, [fall festival at the grape harvest] *which is* in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field” (Exo 23:14-16). Note that the three required times to go up to Jerusalem were at harvest times (barley, wheat and grape). It is no coincidence that in Matthew Jesus is discussing the end times for the kingdom of God and says, “The *harvest is the end of the world* and the reapers are the angels” (Mat 13:38-41). When we go to Revelation we see the same example, “And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to Him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth for her grapes are fully ripe” (Rev 14:15-19). The grape harvest is always associated with the time of Tabernacles.

It was always God’s plan to tabernacle with His people. As we have seen, at Pentecost, the Israelites reached Mount Sinai to receive the Law. Moses went up the mountain for 40 days, stayed around for probably ten days to rebuke and deal with the golden calf situation and then went back up the mountain for 40 more days (90 days or three months in all). This meant that Moses would have come down the mountain around the Day of Atonement to bring atonement for the people. Remember, Moses also brought plans for the Tabernacle down with him as well. After the Day of Atonement, the Israelites began building the Tabernacle so that God would dwell or tabernacle among them. God said, “And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I *may dwell among them*. ⁹ According to all that I shew thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make *it*” (Ex 25:8-9). In Exodus 35:20-22 we see that all the people of Israel willingly brought materials for the work of this tabernacle, therefore, we see that the Tabernacle was built during the Feast of Tabernacles. It is also no accident that in 2 Chronicles 5 we see that Solomon dedicated his Tabernacle on this very festival as well. It was at this time that the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (2 Chr 7:1-9).

Again, God intended to dwell with His people. Now, under the new covenant, God's spirit dwells within us, however, this too, is only a foreshadowing of what is to come. We read in Zechariah, "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. ⁴ And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. . . ¹⁶ And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to ***keep the feast of tabernacles***. ¹⁷ And it shall be, *that* whoso will not come up of *all* the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. ¹⁸ And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that *have no rain*; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech 14:3-3, 16-19). Mount Olives has not been split in two yet, so we know this is a prophecy of something yet to come. This is confirmed and fulfilled in Revelation when we see a New Jerusalem coming out of heaven, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev 21:3). Also, "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor 5:1). In other words, we have this temporary tabernacle of our bodies to dwell in, but there is one greater coming. We see in Peter, "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance; ¹⁴ Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me" (2 Peter 1:13-14).

Another fascinating point is seen in Peter: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the *power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, but were *eyewitnesses of His majesty*" (2 Pet 1:16). When were they eyewitnesses of God's power and coming in His majesty? At the Transfiguration! When we examine this text we see: "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the ***kingdom of God come with power***. ² And *after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain* apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them. . . And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make *three tabernacles*; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Mark 9:2-3,5). Even Peter understood this was to be the Feast of Tabernacles when the Lord would come to reside with men.

We also read in Leviticus, "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have *gathered in the fruit of the land*, [tabernacles] ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day *shall be* a sabbath, and on the *eighth day shall be* a sabbath. ⁴⁰ And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall *rejoice before the LORD your God seven days*" (Lev 23:39-40). How can there be an eighth day with a seven day festival. The same way Passover had seven days attached to a one day festival, Tabernacles has a one day sabbath tagged onto a seven

day festival (I will explain why in a moment). Note as well that these seven days are to be a time of rejoicing.

The focus of the rejoicing during this festival was the pouring out of water on the altar as commanded by God. The Jewish sages have recorded this event as the greatest joy of the entire ceremony. One can only imagine 2 1/2 million Jews praising God at the pouring out of this water, called the water libation. This celebration entailed four huge, 75 foot candlesticks with four gold bowls at the top. The wicks for the candles were worn out priestly garments cut into strips. Four young priests would climb to the top to pour oil from 7 gallon buckets into these bowls at the top of these candlesticks. Because these lights could be seen from such great distances at night, Jerusalem was called the light of the world during this feast. Again, it wasn't an accident that Jesus claims this of Himself, at this very time, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

In addition to Jesus being the light of the world, it was on the last and greatest day of the feast the rabbis would pour out water from a pitcher to ask God's blessings to be upon the next year with rain and a good harvest. On this very day Jesus stood up and proclaimed Himself to be the Living Water in John 7:37-38. In essence, what Jesus was saying is that I am what gives you life. In John we read, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14).

There were 3 groups of priests for the daily ceremonies. The first group was responsible for the slaying of the sacrifices. The second group went out the Water Gate to the pool of Siloam which had the "living water." The high priest in this division had a golden vase to draw water with while his assistant had a silver vase filled with wine. After the water was drawn they would go back to the Temple where he would pour out the golden vase of water into a silver cup while the assistant poured out the wine into another silver cup (opposite one another). So water and blood (wine) was poured out on the altar. Then there was great rejoicing as they would sing the hallel from Psalm 118, but look what they were singing, "The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become *my salvation*. [literally, in Hebrew is Yeshua]¹⁵ The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is in the tabernacles* of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly" (Ps 118:14-15). They also would sing from Isaiah which says, "Behold, God *is* my salvation [Yeshua]; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; He also is become my salvation [Yeshua]. ³ Therefore with joy shall ye *draw water out of the wells of salvation*" (Isa 12:2-3). They were literally calling out the Name of Yeshua on this great feast. Not only that, but look at what Yeshua Himself said on this day, "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. . . Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. . .³⁷ In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. ³⁸ He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:2,14,37-38). Jesus declared to be that salvation and the living water on the very time the priest was to be pouring out the water on the altar.

The third group of priests were the ones that went out to the Beautiful Gate to the Motzah Valley to cut willow branches (25-30 feet long). They would carry and wave these branches as

they marched back to the Temple. This was all to symbolize the Spirit of God coming upon Jerusalem.

Remember I said there was an eight day added at the end of this seven day festival. Why? The number eight is viewed as a new beginning. After seven days, the week starts all over again. It is like starting over in a circle. Therefore, the eight day is like a new beginning. We read of this new beginning “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet 3:12-13). There were seven days of creation that will pattern 7,000 years of history (this will be discussed later) and then the 8th day begins with the conclusion of Tabernacles as we will live eternally with the Lord. In addition we read, “And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of *every* seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, *in the feast of tabernacles*, ¹¹ When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law [Hebrew is Torah] before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that *is* within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law” (Deut 31:10-12). It is during this festival that God is going to gather Israel together to set us straight. While the church has messed everything up with strange doctrines and legalism, Yeshua will return to teach us His ways for the new heaven and earth. Isaiah speaks of this day and tells us it is at the end of time, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations [remember this is the feast of nations]* shall flow unto it. ³ And *many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, [that is Jerusalem]* to the house of the God of Jacob; and *He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law,* [Torah] and the word of the LORD *from Jerusalem*. ⁴ And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. ⁵ O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk *in the light* of the LORD” (Is 2:1-5). The same is said in Micah, “But in the *last days* it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. ² And *many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,* and to the house of the God of Jacob; and *He will teach us of His ways,* and we will walk in His paths: for the law [Torah] shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:1-2). In other words, at the Feast of Tabernacles, we are going to sit in Jerusalem at the feet of our Lord and He will teach us His ways (Deut 33:2-4). What a time of rejoicing that will be!!!

As we read the book of Nehemiah we see this festival being celebrated and a foreshadowing of the Lord’s return to read the Law and teaching us to understand it: “And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the *water gate*; [this is the gate the priests went out to get water at the Feast of Tabernacles] and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to *bring the book of the law of Moses*, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and

all that could hear with understanding, upon the *first day of the seventh month [feast of trumpets]*. And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law. . . So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading” (Neh 8:1-3,8). It continues, “And on the *second day* were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law. ¹⁴ And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by^e Moses, that the children of Israel should *dwelt in booths in the feast of the seventh month*: ¹⁵ And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as *it is* written. . . Also day by day, *from the first day unto the last day*, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the *feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner*” (Neh 8:13-15,18). Just as Nehemiah used this festival to instruct the people about God’s law, this Feast of Tabernacles will be used to instruct us as to what life will be like during the Messianic age to come. Come Lord Jesus come!

The Torah is viewed as water because Torah is just yaw-raw with a T in front of it. Yaw-raw means to flow as water. There are many Scriptures that refer to the Lord’s coming as rain as well. We read in Psalms: “He shall come down like rain on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish; and abundance of peace, until the moon is not. He shall also have the rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Ps 72:6-8, see also, Eze 34:26, Hab 2:14, Hos 6:3, Joel 2:23). Let’s follow this a bit further. After Jesus proclaims Himself the living water on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles look what the Jews say: “Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. ⁴¹ Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? . . . Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? ⁴⁸ Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? ⁴⁹ But this people who *knoweth not the law are cursed*” (John 7:40, 47-49). They did the same thing as in the days of Jeremiah where we read, “The priests said not, Where *is* the LORD? and they that handle the law knew Me not. . . For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water [no law] ” (Jer 2:8). These people rejected the living water and built themselves doctrines that did not follow the true Law of God, just like the church today has done. So what does Jesus do on the eighth day? He gathers them around His feet where He can teach them His ways, His Torah in proper perspective just as He will at His return: “Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ² And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down, and taught them. ³ And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴ They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵ Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: ***but what sayest Thou?***” (John 8:1-5). I for one can hardly wait for the Lord to return when we will sit at His feet and be instructed by Him.

After this woman who was caught in adultery was brought before Jesus, He instructed them as to the correct interpretation of the Law and stooped down to write something on the

ground. This raises two questions: What did He write and how did they respond to Yeshua's instruction? We read, "And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst" (John 8:6-8). Isn't it something that the day before these same people were rejecting the fountain of Living Water and now they are convicted and ashamed. Look at what Jeremiah said would happen: "O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, *and* they that depart from me *shall be written in the earth*, because they have forsaken the LORD, *the fountain of living waters*. ¹⁴ Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; *save me*, and I shall be saved: for thou *art* my praise" (Jer 17:13-14). Once again, Jesus was fulfilling the Scriptures and the festivals as after His instruction about the Law on the eighth day, people were ashamed and convicted of their sinful way and their rejection of the Living Water.

We read in Hosea, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos 4:6). This verse is quoted all the time, yet rarely the whole verse to get the context. It continues, "because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the Law [Torah] of thy God." What is the knowledge people are lacking? Knowledge of the proper use of the Law. This is what the text is saying, yet the truth of it seems to rub so many the wrong way. This is one reason we need Jesus to return to instruct us.

As we have seen, the tabernacle was a model of our heavenly home. Therefore, One reason they would live in booths during this week was to also symbolize their heavenly home where God would protect them. Jesus also said, "In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:2-3). This house Jesus is preparing is in some ways our tabernacle. Jesus tells us in Revelation about the New Jerusalem, "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the *Lamb are its temple*" (Rev 21:22-23). The temple and the tabernacle were pretty much the same thing. Just as Jesus "tabernacled" among us on earth (John 1:1-4), He is coming again as that tabernacle. Again, what a joyous celebration that will be.

This also brings us to the most important Messianic significance of this feast. It is on the Feast of Tabernacles that it seems Jesus was born. I know we celebrate Christmas today for that event, however, as shocking as it may be, Christmas is actually a pagan holiday that was Christianized. In some ways the church has changed the "appointed times" of Scripture. If Jesus would have been born in December, it would have been freezing and the shepherds would not have been out in the fields. Remember, the "Word became flesh and tabernacled among us" (John 1:14). Some translations use the word "dwelt among us" but it is the word "tabernacled." In Luke we read, "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah. . . while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, ⁹ According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord" (Luke 1:5, 8-9). This is very important because it tells us when Zachariah would have been ministering in the Temple. Back in the Old Testament we see that there were 24 divisions of priests and we are told, "Now *these are* the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ² But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. . . The seventh to Hakkoz, *the eighth to Abijah*, . . . These *were* the orderings of

them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him” (1 Chron 24:1-2,10, 19). Here we clearly see that the eighth division was the time priests of Abijah would serve in the temple, and we just saw Zachariah was in that division. So when did the 8th division of Abijah serve? Passover was the first of the month on the Jewish calendar (around April). There were 24 divisions serving two weeks each, meaning 48 weeks of the year were filled. The Jewish calendar has 51 weeks in a year because they only have about 30 days in a month (They add a leap month about every 17 years). If 48 weeks of 51 are filled with the 24 divisions, what about the other 3 weeks? There were 3 festivals that were required for all priests to attend in Jerusalem for a week, therefore, the entire 51 week year is covered. The 8th course (16 weeks from Passover including the required week of the festival) puts you at Pentecost or *Shavuot*. In other words, Zachariah was ministering at the Temple during Pentecost (Jewish records confirm this division serving at that time as well). As you know, when Zachariah was ministering the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said that Elizabeth was going to have a son and that he was to name him John (Luke 1). Then in verse 23 we see that Zachariah and Elizabeth go home where she hides herself for 5 months. In verse 26 we see that in the 6th month of her pregnancy Gabriel was sent to Mary and Mary was told that she was pregnant and that Elizabeth was now 6 months along. This puts us at the time of Hanukkah (festival of lights). Therefore, Jesus, the light of the world, was most likely conceived on the Feast of Lights. This also means that John the Baptist was 6 months older than Jesus. In verse 56 we see Mary went and spend 3 months with Elizabeth. Why three months? Because Elizabeth was six months along when Gabriel came to Mary. Six months plus three means that is the time John the Baptist was born. Six months later, Mary gave birth and that puts us at the Feast of Tabernacles when Jesus would be born. In short, John the Baptist was conceived at Pentecost, Jesus was conceived at Hanukkah and born on Tabernacles.

Since this was a required festival, this would also explain why there was no room in the inn for them. It was common to declare a tax during these feasts since everyone would be coming to Jerusalem anyway. According to the Old Testament, Jesus would have gone through a purification rite 40 days after His birth which was when Herod dies. This fits well with Josephus who said that Herod died in the Autumn of 4 B.C.

Since Jesus was born on this great feast of joy (Deut 16:14), God had arranged the ultimate birthday party for the birth of His Son. The people would have been singing the Hallel of Psalm 118 saying, “This is the day which the LORD hath made; *we will rejoice* and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD” (v 24-25), and “The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation [Yeshua]. The voice of rejoicing and *salvation is in the tabernacles* of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. I will praise Thee for Thou hast heard me, and are become my salvation [YESHUA] (Ps 118:14-15, 21). All the time they were singing these words, the Savior was born in a stable while and the heavenly host joined in to rejoice during this festival of joy: “Suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:13).

Finally, on the eighth day Jesus was circumcised to confirm His covenant with Abraham and Mary and Joseph offered a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons as the sacrifice for His

purification (Luke 2:22-24). What this tells us is that Mary and Joseph were poor because in Leviticus 12:6-8 we see that the normal sacrifice was a lamb, but if you were poor you could offer two turtledoves or pigeons. While Mary and Joseph thought they didn't have a lamb to offer, they were offering the very Lamb of God on the eighth day. Praise God for His Divine plan and control of history!!!

This all supports what we have earlier discussed in that no one believes Jesus was born at Christmas time. The only reason we celebrate this holiday is because Constantine tried to get the support of the pagan and religious people by melding Christianity with the pagan celebration of Christmas. The church simply tried to overtake the holiday much like they are trying to do with Halloween. In fact to show you that Christmas was originally a day to worship the sun we see that Tammuz, the Babylonian sun god, Ra, the Egyptian sun god, Zeus, the Greek sun god and Mithras, the Roman sun god were all worshipped on December 25th. Jesus was even crucified on the cross, which most theologians agree was a capital T which was the Tow symbol for their god. Easter is really no different either. The 1934 Britannica Encyclopedia states under under Easter, "Ostara, or Eastre, was the goddess of Spring in the religion of the ancient Angles and Saxons." This is the same Ashtera, Asherah or Astarte mentioned in the Scriptures of which the Israelites were to: "Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places" (Deut 12:3). According to historical tradition, Shem of the Bible, killed Nimrod who then became the sun god. Nimrod had a wife named Semiramis or Beltsus who claimed that the sun's rays had impregnated her and the child born was named Tammuz. Tammuz was later killed by a wild boar when he was 40 years old (which is where the weeping for Tammuz comes from and also where the tradition of eating ham originated). When Semiramis died she returned to earth in a giant egg that hit the Euphrates and supposedly she turned a bird into an egg laying rabbit. There are variations of this story but the main aspects are the same. Any search on the internet can give you the origins clearly. As for Tammuz, we see in the Bible, "Then he brought me to the entrance to the north gate of the house of the Lord, and I saw women sitting there, mourning for Tammuz. ¹⁵ He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? You will see things that are even more detestable than this. ¹⁶ He then brought me into the inner court of the house of the Lord, and there at the entrance to the temple, between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men. With their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, they were bowing down to the sun in the east" (Ezek 8:14-16). I pray that we do not participate in any detestable practice in any way.

When the Lord returns to straighten us all out, could it be that He will remove our traditions for the Biblical rehearsals? Jeremiah writes about the end times, "The Gentiles shall come unto thee [the Jew] from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and *things* wherein *there is* no profit" (Jer 16:19). One can't help but wonder if we have done what the Israelites did when we read in the times of the kings by simply taking upon the culture of the pagan nations before us: "And there were also sodomites in the land: *and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel*" (1 Kings 14:24; see also 2 Kings 17:8, 2 Chron 17:4, 33:2, 36:14, Ezra 6:21 and Ezek 20:4). In fact, when we look at the golden calf incident who were the Israelites worshipping? Look carefully at the following text: "And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an

altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow *is a feast to the LORD*. ⁶ And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. ⁷ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*: ⁸ They have turned aside quickly *out of the way which I commanded them*: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exo 32:5-8). There can be no question that they were trying to worship the LORD, Yahweh, but in the ways of the pagan nations from which they were brought out. They had quickly turned aside from what God had commanded to worship Him the way they wanted to from their own upbringing and traditions. Again Exodus 12:17 said these festivals were to be observed “in your generations by an ordinance for ever” (see also Lev 23:14). As we have already shown as well, Tabernacles and Passover will be celebrated at the Lord’s return so I think forever really means forever.

When we adopt children from another country today do we take upon the culture of the adopted child? No, they take upon our culture and tradition don’t they? When the Gentile was grafted into the Jewish olive tree (covenant) did we try and make that tree look Gentile? I think we have. Earlier we pointed out how Joseph was a Christ figure. If you recall his brothers did not recognize him when they went to Egypt. Why not? Because he dressed, talked and looked like an Egyptian. Likewise, today the church has dressed, spoke and looked like pagans to our Jewish brothers and this has kept them from recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. I am not saying we are all sinning by celebrating Jesus on December 25th. My God owns every day of the year and deserves to be praised on each of them, however, we must ask if our traditions have hindered the spread of the Gospel to God’s people?

The point is, these feasts were spotlighted for a reason, but modern Christians seem to be ignoring them today because they think the spotlight has been turned off. Some try to say that they are fulfilled already. I hope you can see that this is not the case, they are only partly fulfilled as they continue to foreshadow not only the first coming of our Savior, but also the second. We have seen that the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover will be celebrated after the Lord’s second coming (Zech 14:1-18, Ezek 45:21-25) so all believers will one day join in on these festivals. There are seven Jewish feasts with the spring feasts focusing on to the death and resurrection. The fall feasts focus on Christ’s second return, judgment day and His heavenly reign. The feasts, even from a Christian perspective, are not null and void, but very applicable for our lives today. Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to God’s Word. In fact, if you slowly examine the book of John you will see the only part of the entire book that does not happen at the time of a festival (at least we can’t say for sure anyway) is John 1:29-2:12, 4:54, 6:21-71, 9:1, 11:7-53. All the rest takes place during a feast (see 2:13, 5:1, 7:2, 10:22, 11:55 for examples). You will see John chapters 2, 6, and 12 all happen at Passover. John chapters 5 and 7 happen at Tabernacles, and John 10 at Hanukkah (not commanded to celebrate in the Old Testament but was added as a result of a miracle during the time of the Maccabees).

In Hosea 6 we read, “Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge Him. As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth” (Hos 6:3). Jesus is here called the winter and the spring rains.

The Jews have long made the point that the spring feasts are used to celebrate the spring rains and the fall feasts are used to celebrate the winter rains. It seems that Hosea may have been saying that Jesus will come in the spring (as He did at Passover 2000 years ago) and He will return again in the fall (at the Feast of Tabernacles). When one studies these fall feasts, there can be no question that they speak of the Christ's second coming.

SABBATH DAY

I often ask people how many commandments we have. The answer is almost always ten, however, I question that answer. Isn't it strange that when we say that "thou shall not murder" everybody agrees. When I say, "thou shall not steal" everyone says that's right. When I say, "thou shall not commit adultery" everyone says amen to that. However, when I say, "Thou shall remember the Sabbath and keep it holy," we all say, "hey, God, what about football"? The Bible is clear as one of the Ten Commandments that we are to remember and keep this Sabbath day holy (Ex 20:8). Isn't it ironic that this commandment is ignored more than all others? Consider the following verses:

- "Isaiah said, "Blessed *is* the man *that* doeth this, and the son of man *that* layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil" (Isa 56:2).
- "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words: ¹⁴ Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*" (Isa 58:13).
- "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that sanctify them. . . And hallow My sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I *am* the LORD your God" (Ezek 20:12,20).

How is the Sabbath a sign. Just as in the festivals, this day was given to foreshadow things to come. A sabbath is the seventh day of the week and as we examine many of the sevens in Scripture we see a pattern emerges. It appears that each section of Revelation (churches, seals, trumpets and vials) can be separated with the first four following a certain theme, the next three following another. Further, the last set of three (fifth, sixth, seventh) can be divided with a period of silence or some type of interlude between the second and third (sixth and seventh). In short, they are split 1,2,3,4**5,6 break 7. Also, in the creation week we see the first four days having the theme of material creations while the last two are dealing with living creatures. The sixth and seventh day are separated as on the seventh day, God rested. Again we see a four, two, one split. The following is an example showing how the seven seals of Revelation follow this pattern (as do the trumpets and vial judgments as well):

1. *White Horse* (first four follow one theme & often successive).
2. *Red Horse*
3. *Black Horse*
4. *Pale Horse*
5. **Scene in Heaven** (next two follow another theme).
6. **Sun, Moon, Stars changed.**
7. **Trumpets sound to prepare for war.** (Last one separated by an interlude).

Using the genealogical record, we see that there were exactly 4,000 years from Creation to Christ. In the year 2000, we have had 2,000 years of New Testament, New Covenant era, and then a seventh 1,000 year reign would be a time of rest when Satan was bound. The book of Hebrews also supports this interpretation:

“Therefore, since the promise of entering His rest **still stands**, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, ‘So I declared on oath in My anger, they shall never enter My rest.’ **And yet His work has been finished since the creation of the world.** For somewhere He has spoken about the **seventh day in these words**: ‘And on the seventh day God rested from all His work.’ And again in the passage above He says, ‘They shall never enter My rest.’ It still remains *that some will enter that rest*, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later He spoke through David, as was said before: ‘Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. **There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest** for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from His. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience” (Heb 4:1-11).

Here we see that the Sabbath day (7th day) is still to come and that it will be a Day of rest. Perhaps that is also why we read in Peter, “By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord *a day is like a thousand years*, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise” (2 Pet 3:7-9). We must be careful not to extend this thought into theorizing the six days of creation occurred over long periods of time. They were literal, 24 hour days! However, even Martin Luther noted that each day of creation seemed to roughly correspond to a thousand years of history. For example, the first day of creation was separating light from dark. The first thousand years were dominated by Adam and Eve, who were known for causing the separation of good and evil. The second day of creation was separating water from water and creating the firmament above. The second thousand years of time after creation were dominated by Noah who is well known for living through the Flood and the first rainfall (Gen 2:5). The third day of creation was making dry ground and vegetation. The third thousand years was dominated by Abraham who became a great nation to fill the earth. The fourth day of creation consisted of the sun, moon and stars while the fourth thousand years was dominated by Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel. We have seen in chapter 12, and in Joseph’s dream in Genesis, how the stars, sun and moon have represented the twelve tribes. Then, day five of creation created fish and birds and the fifth thousand years was dominated by the New Testament Church and Christ who fed the five

thousand with a few fish and the Spirit of God landed on Him in the form of a dove. Both the fish and the bird have been New Testament symbols of faith. The sixth day of creation involved the creation of man, while the sixth thousand years of time have been dominated by man growing in knowledge and spreading the Gospel message throughout the world. The seventh day of creation was rest, as the seventh thousand years may be our “Sabbath rest for all of God’s people” as we saw in Hebrews. I realize that there is a fair amount of allegorizing with this, but not too much of a stretch for Luther to identify with. Scripture is filled with this type of allegory, much of which is even explained (see Galatians 4).

Let’s take this thought one step further. If each of the six, 24 hour days of creation foreshadowed each of the six thousand years of time on earth before the millennium, there should be other references to this. Consider the following: Hosea states, “For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, like a great lion to Judah. I will tear them to pieces and go away; I will carry them off, with no one to rescue them. Then ***I will go back to My place until*** they admit their guilt. And they will seek My face; in their misery they will earnestly seek Me. Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds. **After two days** He will revive us; **on the third day** He will restore us, that we **may live in His presence**” (Hosea 5:14-6:2). First of all, note that the Jews had been abandoned by Christ when He went back to His place. Christ’s place can only be understood as heaven here. He would remain there only UNTIL they admit their guilt and recognize Him as the Messiah. Just as Jesus said in Matthew, “For I tell you, you will not see me again *until* you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’” (Mat 23:39). Once they do so, they will repent and return to the LORD. When will this take place? According to the Hosea text, AFTER two days! We are nearing two thousand years since Christ *ascended* into heaven. Therefore, we could perhaps expect a massive turning to Christ from the Jewish people. Then, ON the third day, or the seventh thousandth year after creation (millennium), God would restore them so that they can live with Him in His presence. How can we live in Christ’s presence unless this is the “Sabbath rest” for God’s people that Hebrews spoke of?

The Hosea passage fits nothing that happened in Old Testament history and, therefore, must be a future prophecy, upon which we are about to see fulfilled. There is much evidence showing the Jewish people will turn back to Christ: “I do not want you to be ignorant of this **mystery**, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part **until** the full number of the **Gentiles** has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from **Jacob**. And this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.’ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God’s gifts and **His call are irrevocable**. Just as you who were **at one time** disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that **they too may now receive mercy** as a result of God’s mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all” (Rom 11:25-32). Note that the Jews have only experienced a temporary hardening until the Gentiles have had their fill. Jacob is a term used for Jews and, therefore, cannot include Gentiles under spiritual Israel or ingrafted branches (Rom 11:11). Besides, the Jews and Gentiles are intentionally split up in these verses. When we read Romans 11 and 12 carefully, there is no

question that the Jews will turn to Christ during the end times. Hosea must be talking about the end times. . . two thousand years after Christ “went to His place” in heaven. I pray that God will open our eyes to see this Gospel opportunity.

I realize that many Christians today believe the Sabbath has been done away with and we need not honor it anymore. As we have discussed in other sections, we don’t HAVE to but we should WANT to. Jesus kept the Sabbath. Yet because people have misunderstood the law they think Jesus was saying the Sabbath wasn’t necessary because He healed on the Sabbath, told people to carry their mat on the Sabbath, applied mud to a man’s eyes on the Sabbath etc. However, remember that Biblically none of these were breaking the Sabbath, these were acts that simply broke the extra rules and traditions that the Pharisees had added to God’s law of the Sabbath. In fact the Talmud records arguments about what was or wasn’t acceptable on the Sabbath 200 years after Christ. They never understood that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). The truth is Jesus honored the Sabbath as it was stated in the Old Testament and in the spirit in which God gave it. He went to the synagogue every Sabbath, he warned the disciples to pray that in the end times their “flight would not take place on a Sabbath (Mat 24:20). Despite this there are many Christians who believe that Jesus taught His disciples that it was okay to break the Sabbath. If this was true, why at Jesus burial do we see His disciples honoring the Sabbath: “And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment” (Luke 23:55). Obviously they saw the Sabbath more important than tending to their own Lord’s body. Yeshua must have taught them to revere and remember this holy day.

THE LAW (TORAH)

I have been saying that God would straighten up our view of the law. What does that mean. Too often we associate the appropriate use of the law as what the Pharisees were doing, so we get rid of all the law. This isn’t right. We read, “Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do” (Mat 23:1-3). What does this mean? Do what they Pharisees tell you but don’t do what they do? What Jesus was saying is that they sit in Moses seat, giving the words God gave to Moses, however, they have added all kinds of extra traditions onto that God given law. We can see many examples of this and unfortunately, many Christians have missed this and have confused the law themselves. In Matthew we see the Pharisees say, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.” What was Jesus answer, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition” (Mat 15:2)? Many Christians say that Jesus got rid of the commandment to wash hands before meals and rebuked the Pharisees here for doing it. That isn’t true. In fact, no where in the Old Testament will you find that the Torah commands people to wash before they eat. This was an extra tradition added to the Law by the Pharisees. Jesus was saying, why do you break God’s commands for the sake of your traditions. We see another example in Matthew 12:1-2 where the disciples were hungry and picked some grain to eat on the Sabbath. When the Pharisees saw this they accused them of doing something unlawful. Once

more, when we look in the Old Testament we see that it was only against the Law to harvest with a sickle, not to pick some to eat it (Deut 23:25). Jesus wasn't saying the Law was finished, He was saying your added traditions are wrong.

We read in Deuteronomy "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee" (Deut 28:15). Here we see that God stated that if the Israelites failed to obey His commandments there would be curses that would come upon them. In the synagogue there is a long list of these curses that are read, however, the reason I point this out here is I want to show you what the Jewish Targum Pseudo-Yonatan says about this passage just prior to the curses: "When Moses the prophet began to pronounce the words of threatening the earth trembled., the heavens were moved, the sun and moon were darkened, the stars withdrew their beams, the [patriarchs] answered and said, 'Woe to our children should they sin and bring these maledictions upon themselves; for how will they bear them if destruction be executed on them, and no merit of ours protect them and there be no mans to stand and intercede on their behalf?' Then the [voice of God] spoke from the hight heavens, and said, 'Fear not, ye fathers of the world. If the merit of all generations should fail, yours shall not; and the covenant which I have confirmed with you shall not be annulled, but will [continue to protect] them.'" What is fascinating about this midrash is that God here was reassuring them that His covenant that He made with Abraham would last forever, therefore, even though the Laws of Mount Sinai would be broken, the earlier covenant would not be broken. In other words, the Abrahamic covenant can not be overturned by the Sinai covenant. This is the exact thing Paul writes about in the New Testament: "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise" (Gal 3:17-18). Therefore, we see the Sinai covenant is not about salvation, but is is not removed any more than the first covenant was either. It is interesting to see how this ancient Jewish text had the truth about the law of God and the promises that though it would be broken, there would be one who would "stand in for them."

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Mat 5:17-18). Last I checked heaven and earth were still around so the Law must still be in affect as well. Please do not misunderstand me here either. I am not saying that as Christians we must obey the law, I'm saying we should want to obey the Law. The Law was never taken away, only the condemnation of the law was removed by the blood of Jesus. We would do well to remember the following:

- "Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom 7:12).
- "But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully; ⁹ Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient" (1 Tim 1:8).

- “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Rom 3:21). The law still has a purpose, it just isn’t for righteousness. Thanks be to God for that!

We have already discussed how the seven day week is a pattern of history and the Sabbath day rest of the future (Heb 4). Here we see that God clearly states He created the world in six days because He wanted us to imitate and follow this example. There is no question that it is good for our bodies to rest one out of seven days, but I don’t believe God was thinking as much about our physical well being as He was our spiritual well being. If everyone would take one day out of the week and rest from their work so that they could spend that time with God and make that day “holy,” can you imagine how much closer to people would be to God? Imagine how much one could learn of God’s Word by simply spending a day a week with Him. This still remains one of the Ten Commandments, but it is one that most Christians ignore. Yes, we are not bound to the Ten Commandments. However, that only means that these commandments are not necessary for our salvation. Just because we are not legally bound to them, does not mean we are not morally bound to them. Now we don’t have to obey them, but we still should. God didn’t do away with the law, Jesus only fulfilled it. The law is still there for us to follow out of love for Christ. Isn’t it strange that Jesus gave His own life for us and we can’t even give Him a day? Even during plowing season, the busiest time of the year, one is to stop and give God his heart. Luther used to say that he would pray extra hours when he had a busy day ahead of him. Doesn’t that make sense? It is when we are the busiest that we need God’s help the most. Things always seem to get done, with or without the day of rest, but at least with the day of rest we will get them done more joyfully and draw nearer to God at the same time. I have known many farmers and business men who have taken off the Sabbath and not a one have suffered for it. In fact, I see outward signs of many blessings in their life. As they say, the proof is in the pudding, and the proof is there.

After God had warned the Israelites that they would be cursed if they disobeyed the law we see what part of that curse would be, “The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understanding; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young” (Deut 28:49-50). As we know from history, the Jewish people were taken into exile because they failed to keep the Sabbath and God’s commands. In fact, today, they are still in exile. In some ways, one may say that because of this the gospel is in exile with Israel. Both the Jew and the Gospel began in Israel, both were spread out into all nations and now resides among these nations. Both have been removed from the point of origin, however, both will return to that point of origin as we see in Revelation and various other verses throughout the Bible, that we will be taken to Jerusalem to reign with the returning King.

ROLE OF MOSES AND THE LAW

Today, Judaism focuses on Moses more than any other figure. He was a type of priest, prophet and king, but that will be discussed later. Moses main role was to point them to the Law of God and, therefore, is affectionately called Mosehe Rabanu or Rabbi Moses. He is considered

to be the first and greatest rabbi. Virtually everything in Judaism points to Moses and Mount Sinai.

To fully understand this legal system we must examine its origin when Moses lived around 1400 BC. This legal system connected the people to God. Think about it for a moment, our calendar has no basis for a week. We get our year by the time it takes the earth to go around the sun. We get the month by how long it takes the moon to go around the earth. We get a day by how long it takes the earth to rotate on its axis. We get the week simply because God's creation took six days and He rested on the Sabbath. The Sabbath in itself is proof of God's creation and His authority but it was also given by the Lord to connect the people to God. In ancient days you don't work you don't eat so this forced the people to trust the Lord for providence when they were to rest on the seventh day. It also gave them time to draw nearer to Him in His Word and prayer. The fact that the Laws connected you to God and that they were very humane is unique to all other legal systems throughout history. Within the laws given on Mount Sinai there were 613 statutes, each with a purpose. There were laws in Torah for every part of life, family, criminal, civil, inheritance, property, international, commerce, and agricultural laws. The goal of all of them was to bring a fair and just society.

Exodus 20 introduces the 10 commandments. Why? Because God delivered them Egypt and now as a "consequence" you must do such and such. You see, the law was a result of grace just as Jesus said, "If you love Me you will do what I say." Because God was so gracious and loving to deliver His people out of the slavery of Egypt, the Israelites were to respond by obeying what God desired them to do. The same is true for us today. We should want to obey God because of His sacrifice for us on that cross. This is the proper perspective of the law for a Christian today. In fact, the entire book of Deuteronomy was laid out like a covenant treaty of grace, which was a common thing in this time period as seen by archaeology. These covenant treaties were given when a new king conquered a people. They were outlined something like the following:

- 1) Introduction –explained what happened between them.
- 2) Recites historical relationship with people.
- 3) Stipulations – new requirements and laws.
- 4) Blessings and Curses for obeying or disobeying these new laws.
- 5) Oath to obey was given.
- 6) Succession- What was to happen when a new king came.
- 7) Final reading and location of the copies of this law. (Usually two copies, 1 for the people and 1 for the new king.

What is interesting about this is that if we look at Deuteronomy this is what we see:

Ch 1 Introduction that explains what God did for the people.

Ch 1-4 Relationship between God and people explained.

Ch 5-26 Stipulations to follow.

Ch 27-28 Blessings and Curses for obeying or disobeying.

Ch 30 Oath to obey.

Ch 31 Succession (When Moses passes on).

Ch 31 Final reading and location of the law.

We often envision the Ten Commandments as 5 on one tablet and 5 on the other, but it was probably 10 commandments on both. 1 copy was for the people and 1 copy was for God. Both were placed in the Tabernacle or Temple. The main point of this being, however, is that God gave His law out of grace.

TAKING HOLD OF THE TZIT TZIT

"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to *make tassels on the corners of your garments*, with a blue cord on each tassel. You will have these tassels to look at and *so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them* and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes'" (Num 15:38-40). In this text we see that the Israelites were commanded to make tassels on the corners of their garments as a symbol to remind them of God's commandments. The word translated "tassels" is the Hebrew *tzit tzit*. The corner of the garment where these tassels were placed was called the *canaph*, sometimes translated "wing." As we read the Scriptures we see that God commanded the Israelites to attach a single thread of blue to each of the four corners, or wings, of the garment. However, it wasn't just any shade of blue, it is the shade called *techelet*, which is the same blue dye that was used to color the weavings of the tabernacle and the high priest's robe.

So did Jesus wear a *tzit tzit*? If not, He would have violated the command of God so we know He did. Some Christians have said, "but He rebuked the Pharisees for making their tassels long." He wasn't rebuking the Pharisees for wearing a *tzit tzit*, He was rebuking them for making it a pride thing. Jesus said, "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels (*kraspedon* in Greek) on their garments long" (Mat 23:5-6). (*Kraspedon* is used by the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, in place of *tzit tzit* in Numbers 15:38 so we are talking of the same thing here). According to Mark we see Jesus did indeed wear a *tzit tzit*. There we see that there was a woman who had been bleeding for many years and she said to herself, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well" (Mark 5:28). We see in Luke that she, "Came up behind Him and touched the fringe (*kraspedon*) of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped" (Luke 8:44).

The question is, why did this woman assume this would heal her? In the days of the Apostles some believed that the *tzit tzit* of a holy man possessed special powers. The Talmud says that in times of drought, school children used to grab on to the hem of a miracle worker's garment and implore him to pray for rain. Why would they think such a thing? Because Malachi wrote, "The sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings" (Mal 4:2). In this passage the Jews saw the "sun of righteousness" as a title for the Messiah. The word "wings" in this passage is *canaph* which we saw meant the corner of the garment where the *tzit tzit* was. From this it stands to reason that this woman thought that Jesus was the Messiah, the sun of righteousness. Perhaps this is why Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction" (Mark 5:34). This woman wasn't the only one who realized this either. We read in Mark "And wherever He went into villages, towns or countryside, they place the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed" (Mark 6:56).

Remember the purpose of the *tzit tzit* was so that, "You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes" (Num 15:38-40). The *tzit tzit* was to remind us of the commandments of the LORD. That is interesting when we see a prophetic passage dealing with end times and the *tzit tzit*: "And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat Him, This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe (*tzit tzit*) and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.''" (Zech 8:22-23). This sounds like what we were talking about in the Feast of Tabernacles when the Gentiles are going to grab onto the commandments of God.

Remember the Antichrist is to be a man of lawlessness, in other words, a man without the law. Have we in the church today become men of lawlessness? A question we should all ask ourselves.

In Ephesians we read, "Therefore, remember that formerly you who are *Gentiles by birth* and called 'uncircumcised' by those who call themselves 'the circumcision' (that done in the body by the hands of men) - remember that at that time *you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ*" (Eph 2:11-13). Note that the Gentiles were at one time separate from Christ and the covenant but now Christ has joined us into the Jewish covenant. You see, prior to Jesus, Gentiles had no business keeping the commandments given to Israel, especially those given to Israel to set them apart from other nations (Sabbath, festivals etc.). But by laying hold of Messiah, the Gentiles now lay hold of the covenant status within Israel. This is why the Gentiles can say, "Let us go with you" (Zech 8:23). Unfortunately, I think that, for the most part anyway, Gentiles in the faith have considered it to be a merit on their part NOT to keep God's commandments. Thankfully, this is changing. In the Scriptures we saw how the sick and diseased took hold of the *tzit tzit* of Yeshua's garment and were healed. Likewise, Jesus offers the same spiritual healing to all who take hold of the commandments that the *tzit tzit* of the Messiah represents today. Again, we don't take hold of commandments to be saved, but to be healed.

MIDRASHIC THOUGHT

To understand the Scriptures properly we must look at them as a Jew would. Remember, the Scriptures have been entrusted to the Jew for preservation as we read in Romans, “What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God” (Rom 3:1-2). A Jew uses what is called Midrash, simply put, it is a way to interpret the Bible. The Bible should always interpret itself, but as the church became more Gentile it lost sight of its Jewish origins. People who had a different world view (more Greek thinking) redefined Biblical truth on Greek philosophies instead of explaining in Greek terms the Jewish philosophy that produced the Gospel. Midrashic hermeneutics has the New Testament explaining the Old Testament. It never uses typology or allegory as a basis for doctrine, but rather an illustration of it. In Western hermeneutics we see end times prophecy merely in terms of predictions and fulfillment. Jews see it as patterns that are being recapitulated. We can see an example of this in Matthew 2:15 where Jesus was taken to Egypt as a baby. It states, “And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called My son.” The problem with this is that Matthew is quoting Hosea 11:1 which says that this is in reference to Israel, not Jesus. Was Matthew misquoting the Old Testament? Not at all. He was reading it with a Jewish Midrashic understanding. A Messianic Jew sees Jesus as fulfilling the history of Israel for them. Jesus was living out what Israel was incapable of doing. For example look at the following:

- Israel came about by a miracle birth through the promised son, Isaac. Jesus was born through a promise and miracle of the virgin birth of Mary.
- King David came from Bethlehem as Jesus was our King born in Bethlehem.
- Hosea 11:1 shows Israel was brought out of Egypt to fulfill a promise as Matthew 2:13 shows Jesus was brought out of Egypt to allow Israel to fulfill a promise.
- Pharaoh tries to destroy Israel and Herod tries to destroy Jesus.
- Moses rises as Savior of Israel and Jesus rises as a Savior for Israel.
- Israel was baptized in the Red Sea (1 Cor 10) and Jesus in the Jordan.
- Right after this baptism Israel went into 40 Years of desert wandering and Jesus went into His 40 day wilderness temptation.
- Joshua leads Israel into the promised land and Yeshua (Joshua is the same name) leads us into our promised land.
- Joshua was told to destroy the inhabitants to avoid contamination but they failed in this mission. Therefore, Yeshua rids the land of evil by casting out demons and healing the sick.

- Israel dies under the old covenant but rises under the new. Yeshua died under the old covenant and rose under the new.

Joshua was unsuccessful in cleansing the land as instructed so the demons stayed in this land until Yeshua could come. When He arrived, He cast out the demons that had been left there by the pagan tribes left there by Joshua. There were many sick there because of this disobedience as we read, “If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His eyes, if you pay attention to His commands and keep all His decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you” (Exo 15:26, see also Deut 7:15, 28:60). Jesus comes and heals the sick from Israel’s disobedience. Finally, Jesus teaches Israel truth to and leaves His Spirit to empower them to go to the nations and fulfill their purpose as intended. However, as we know, Israel’s restoration is not yet complete because many still do not believe, but that time is coming soon.

Other examples of Midrashic thought are clearly seen in reading Galatians 4 where God tells us that the Old Testament story of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac represent Mount Sinai, the Law, the New Jerusalem and the Gospel. In 1 Corinthians 10 we see the Exodus was a type of our departure out of spiritual Egypt. We see that Pharaoh was a type of antichrist, who was destroyed. Upon the deliverance by God they sing the song of Miriam, likewise, upon our deliverance from the antichrist we will sing the same song in Revelation. The bones of Joseph were brought into the promised land and the dead in Christ will rise first. Likewise, in Matthew, wicked Herod was judged and the Messiah comes out of Egypt where He fled in times of trouble. In essence, the entire book of Exodus is a pattern of our own spiritual life (see my book on Exodus for further examples). We see that Jesus death and resurrection was a typified by Jonah’s being inside a great fish (Mat 12) and so on. In any case, the Jew would see the Epistles as simply inspired commentary on the rest of the Scriptures as displayed in Galatians 4. This is why Paul addresses the Mosaic Law reactively in Galatians to refute the error, however, he addresses it proactively in Romans to illuminate the truth.

ONE MESSIAH WHO IS COMING TWICE

Many people miss the Old Testament types of Christ. We often see that Isaac or Moses typified Christ, but few realize how many other Old Testament figures do the same. The Jews, however, did not miss these Messianic foreshadowings. In fact, when we look at Joseph, there are over 100 comparisons with him to the life of Christ. Consider just a few:

1. Both Jesus and Joseph were betrayed by Jewish brothers into Gentile hands.
2. Both were betrayed by Yehuda or Judas for 20 pieces of silver.
3. Both were taken to a place of condemnation then to exaltation in one day.
4. Both were condemned between two criminals, one who died and one who lived.
5. Upon exaltation, both had every knee bow before them.
6. Both had all power and dominion given to them.

7. Upon exaltation, both took upon a Gentile bride.
8. Both were not recognized by their own Jewish brothers on the first trip.
9. Joseph was recognized by his own brothers on the second trip, as Jesus will be accepted as Messiah on His second return.
10. Both were falsely accused at an unfair trial.
11. Both had their cloak taken to prove he was no longer in the pit.
12. Both were despised for a prophetic gift.
13. Both were 30 years old when their ministry began.
14. Both were taken to Egypt.
15. Both were the firstborn.
16. Both were tempted.
17. Joseph said, "You will not see my face again. . . unless your brother is with you."
Jesus said, "You will not see my face again. . . unless you say blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord."
18. When Judah repented Joseph revealed himself. Not until the Jews repent will Jesus reveal Himself (Hos 6).

The Jews understood that the Messiah would come in the character of Joseph and be typified by him. However, they also understood that the Messiah was to be the Son of David and that His life would replay experiences of David's life as well. This is why it was said that the Messiah would be both the son of David and the son of Joseph. Herein lies the problem. Many Jews expected the Messiah to fulfill both roles in one coming, however, in reality He was to be the suffering servant in the role of Joseph at His first coming (Isa 53, Zech 9:9 and Ps 22) and then the son of David at His second coming (Zech 12-14).

We have discussed how the Jews would sing the Hallel at Passover from Psalm 118. We see in Matthew 21:9 the crowds were singing “Hosanna to the *Son of David*.” Later in verse 42 Jesus calls Himself the stone which is rejected which comes from Psalm 118:22. During Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem the crowds were singing “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” from Psalm 118:26. What is interesting about that is that just a few days later Jesus said, “For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord’” (Mat 23:39). I thought they just did that? Jesus was acting as if the Passover entry into Jerusalem never happened. Why? Part of our answer is found in Matthew where we read, “A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while other cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ ‘Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest!’” (Mat 21:8-9). Notice that they were cutting branches. When we go and look at the Passover commands from Leviticus 23 we see that they weren’t commanded to do so for this feast. This was for the Feast of Tabernacles. In both Passover and Tabernacles Psalm 118 is sung, however, only in Tabernacles did God say to cut branches. This may indicate that the Jews were seeing Jesus as the coming Son of David and were trying to celebrate Tabernacles before the proper time. They wanted to see the Son of David, their reigning king, yet He was only coming as the suffering servant this time around. They didn’t understand there was one Messiah with two separate comings. Many of the disciples even thought that Jesus was going to take the throne at any moment, yet Jesus always put those ideas down. Even in Daniel we see that the saints will take the kingdom only AFTER the Messiah returns, not before: “As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom” (Dan 7:21-22). The Jews should have been embracing the suffering servant, the Son of Joseph and the kingdom to come theology, not the kingdom now theology. Sadly, there are many in the church today who are making the same mistake. They don’t want a kingdom come but a kingdom now so they reject the Messiah.

MIDRASH IN THE GENESIS 15 COVENANT

When covenants were made there was a certain ceremony that would take place. We see this ceremony recorded not only in the Scriptures, but also supported in archaeology. There were nine basic things that took place when making a covenant.

1. Each party would take off their coat and exchange them. This was like saying I am giving all of myself to you.
2. Each party would take off their Belt. A belt held your weapons so it was giving strength to the other person. It also said that if anybody attacked them, they would be attacking you. In other words, your fight is my fight.
3. Cutting the Covenant. Here animals were split in half and laid so that the blood would flow into a trench between the halves. Each party would normally walk through the blood filled trench in a figure eight pattern coming back to meet one another face to face. It was like saying, “If I break this covenant with you, you can cut me in half.”

4. Raise Right arm and mix blood. Each party would cut their palms and bring them together mixing their blood together. This was saying we are one life or one blood.
5. Exchange Names. Each party took the last name of the other person.
6. Make a scar as a permanent and public testimony.
7. Give terms of the covenant which was saying everything that I have is yours. I give my life to you.
8. Eat the Memorial Meal which was usually bread and wine fed to one another.
9. Plant a memorial tree as a testimony for all to see.

With this covenant process laid out, let's see if we can identify this in the covenant God gave to Abraham:

Gen 15:8-18 "But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?" 9 So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." 10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. 11 Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. 12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. 13 Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. 15 You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure." 17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates " Notice that Abram cut animals in half but only God went through the trench. This was because this was God's covenant to Abram, not Abram's covenant to God.

We can also see aspects of this covenant process with David and Jonathan: "After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt" (1 Sam 18:1-4). Here we see an exchange of cloaks, belt and weapons. Later after Jonathan dies, David seeks out Mephibosheth to show kindness to him for Jonathan's sake.

While these do show similarities to what we see in archaeology, it is only a small comparison to what we see when the New Testament elaborates on the Old. Observe the following:

1) Take off coat: Jesus put on our nature and He gives us His nature. God offers all of Himself to us. “Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:4). Also, “He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). It is just as Isaiah had promised: “I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” (Isa 61:10).

2) Take off Belt: He will fight for you and if anyone attacks you, they attack Him. “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:14-18). God told Abraham, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward” (Gen 15:1).

3) Cut the Covenant: Christ on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice that could never be broken. “But because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them” (Heb 7:24-25).

4) Raise Right arm and mix blood: Christ raised His arms and shed His blood. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’” (Gal 3:13).

5) Exchange Names: Abram became Abraham. God is now called the “God of Abraham.” “‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God's friend” (James 2:23-24). Also, “It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God’” (Rom 9:26). “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory” (Rom 8:16-17). “Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name” (Rev 3:12-13).

6) Make a Scar: Abraham must be circumcised (Gen 17). In Ephesians 1:13-14 we read, “Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory.” Also in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 we read, “He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”

7) Give Terms of Covenant: John 14:15-16 says, "If you love Me, you will obey what I command. In 1 John 4:19-21 it says, "We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother." Finally, in 1 John 5:2-4 we see, "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out His commands. This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world."

8) Eat Memorial Meal: Communion! We read in John 6:53-57, "Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him.'" We see why this is so important in Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."

9) Plant Tree: We see in Revelation 22:1-5 "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CHOSEN?

In Genesis 12:1-3 we read, "The LORD had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and *I will bless you*; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will *bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*'" This was the covenant that God gave to Abraham and later to Isaac, then Jacob, the Israel. This is why God is called the God of Abraham and then the God of Abraham and Isaac until finally he is called the God of Israel 203 times in the Bible. God follows His covenant.

In the above covenant we see the promise is really to everyone on earth because they will be blessed through the Jew. Therefore, the function of the Jew being chosen by God is to bring blessings to other nations; to bring God's ways and Gospel to the nations. In Genesis 15 God gives the promise of the land of Israel to the Jew. Ironically, most Jews have never lived there, yet they have a longing to be there. Even at Passover they say, "Next year in Jerusalem." There is an innate drive to connect with the land of Israel and God's covenant. The problem is this can not be fulfilled until they come to know Yeshua as the Messiah.

We see the covenant being lived out right away in Genesis. God said that Israel was to be a blessing to the nations. In chapter 20 we see how Abraham blessed Abimelech: “To Sarah he said, ‘I am giving your brother a thousand shekels of silver. This is to cover the offense against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated.’ Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again” (Gen 20:16-17). In chapter 47 Jacob blessed Pharaoh, “Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence” (Gen 47:10). Later in the New Testament we see that the Gospel was always given to the Jew first and then to the Gentile from there. We are heirs of the Gospel because of them.

In the movie, *Fiddler on the Roof* there is a famous line where a Jew states, “Lord, couldn’t you have chosen somebody else?” The Jew is God’s chosen people, yet it doesn’t seem to be a good thing to be chosen. The Jew has been persecuted throughout history more than any other nation yet when you study their history we see the covenant has been upheld. Every time a nation goes against Israel they are cursed and every time a nation supports Israel, they are blessed. To be chosen by God means to be used by Him. Sometimes we have the attitude that if we are chosen by God we should be rich and have no problems. The opposite is true. God chose Abraham and the promised land to him. Why? Look at the promised land. There are many other places around the world that could have been more fertile and easier to live in. Why not Iowa? The geography of the area shows us that the promised land was smack dab in the middle of the populated world at that time. In other words, if any nation was going to go anywhere else they would have to pass by God’s chosen people to get there. God was placing the Jew to be a light for Him, in other words, a blessing to the nations all around them. Likewise, now that we have been grafted into this covenant we are chosen by God as well. This means there will be many trials in this life as Christ promised. It also means we have a job to do as we read, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, *that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light*” (1 Pet 2:9). We are now to be a blessing to the world around us as we go and declare the Gospel to them.

WHY DO THE JEWS NOT HEAR THE GOSPEL TODAY?

There isn’t just one answer to that question, however, the biggest reason is because God has hardened their heart until the full number of Gentiles comes in (Rom 11:25). “God has bound all men over to disobedience in order that He may have mercy on them all” (Rom 11:32). There is a time coming in the near future when they will hear and the Lord will return again.

Another reason is that the Gentiles have pretty well disowned and rejected them to the point that very few Gentiles even take the time to evangelize to a Jew. Truth is, very few Jews would even allow themselves to listen. One of the reasons for this is because they have been set up in a system that won’t allow them to hear.

As the Jews were scattered throughout the earth, different styles of worship and thought developed. In the West there was a Nasi who was head of the Sanhedrin and he had to be a descendant of the house of David. One of these Nasi's was Judah Ha Nasi who lived around 200 AD. He wrote down the rulings of the Rabbis which became known as the Mishna (means to repeat). Most of these rulings were written down between 0 and 200 AD. Within the Mishna were sub rulings called Trachtates. The Mishna was debated among the rabbis for 300 years until around 500 AD they wrote down the debate over the Mishna, which is called the Gemarra. Therefore, the Mishna plus the Gemarra equals the Talmud and the Talmud has become what Judaism is today (Talmudic Judaism).

In Judaism (don't get confused with Messianic Jews, those Jews who believe Jesus is the Messiah), the rabbi is not a pastor, he is more of a scholar. His people skills really don't matter and this is one reason why education is valued so highly among the Jewish people because a rabbi is as close as you can get to God. Therefore, to be a good Jew you need to be educated. In the Messianic Jewish world this isn't the case and this is one reason why Messianic Jews are often looked down upon by other Jews. To give you an understanding of the Talmud and its affects on Judaism we need to examine a passage from the Talmud. Keep in mind as you read this that these are real people documented throughout history and what happens is believed to be real history. It is a rather lengthy story that I have simply highlighted here and though it isn't the most interesting, it will provide you will valuable insight into Jewish thought. In this passage we read about a great debate with Rabbi Eleazer who debates around 110 AD with other Rabbis over the ritual purity of an oven. He argues that the oven is clean and thus any vessels put in the oven are clean as well. The other Rabbis say it isn't clean (This discussion is known as *Haggadah*, meaning, story). Eleazer argues that if *Halachah* (rulings) support his argument he is going to ask God to let the tree prove it. He prays to God and the tree leaps 100 yards away, however, the other Rabbi's say you can't use this as evidence. Eleazer prays to God again to let the stream reverse its direction and it actually does reverse its direction, but they don't accept that miracle either. Then Eleazer asks God to have the walls of the building they are in to lean over to fall but the other Rabbis don't accept it because the walls lean over, however, they remain standing. They say that if they were wrong about their side of the argument the walls would have fallen all the way and crushed them. A *bod col* (heavenly voice) comes forth and Rabbi Jeremiah says the Law was given at Sinai so we don't accept new heavenly voices. The voice from heaven says "why are you arguing with Eleazer." Rabbi Joshua says "its not in heaven" meaning Torah was already given at Sinai and quotes Torah by saying, "TURN AFTER THE MAJORITY" What he's saying is what was given at Sinai is all that you need. They aren't talking just about the written Torah but also the oral as well. Therefore, since Torah says when there is a dispute, majority rules and that is God's will, even if a message from heaven comes, it doesn't matter anymore. Rabbi Nathan met Elijah the prophet (according to tradition Elijah will come down to earth to let Rabbis know things). He says God is trying to get the attention of the Rabbis but there is nothing he can do to convince them. In the end Eleazer is excommunicated and one Rabbi decides to tell him his fate. The reason for excommunication is because he wouldn't accept the ruling of the majority and dissidents will create a split in society so he has to get the boot. Eleazer is greatly respected so the one who goes to tell Eleazer has to be of equal respect or else people will rebel. [The Rabbi that goes is the same one that proclaimed Bar Kokba as the Messiah.] Rabbi Akiva says, notice everyone is staying away from you and Eleazer is so distraught that everywhere he looks judgment of God falls. Gamliel is the Nasi (ruler) of Sanhedrin at this time (Grandson of the Gamliel Paul knew. The Gamliel Paul was taught by was Hilel's son). Gamliel was on a boat that was destroyed and it is believed that the Lord rose up against Gamliel because of how he treated Eleazer, however, Gamliel argues with the Lord and says he had to excommunicate Eleazer because otherwise there would be a split. The Lord spares Gamliel for now. The story ends with Eleazer's wife (Sister of Gamliel-Ema Shalom) who wouldn't let Eleazer fall on his face. Why? He may appeal to the Gates of Onanah (gates of heaven). In Jewish belief if you are wrongly treated you can appeal to God and God

will avenge you. She doesn't want her brother to die. One day she slips up and catches Eleazer on his face in prayer. What happens? Gamliel dies.

There are a few things that need to be addressed in this event. First, the idea of majority rules. The big issue is that the Rabbis are saying they have the authority given to them by God to make these rulings, thus no matter what happens, even miracles from heaven can't change their rulings. If there is a dispute, majority rules and that is the end of the matter. Well what do the Scriptures say about this "majority rules"? They get this idea from this passage: "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, and do not show favoritism to a poor man in his lawsuit" (Ex 23:2-3). Notice anything funny here? This passage actually says the opposite! To say majority rules based on this Scripture verse is a problem in itself.

Secondly, the Talmud records on the side of this passage that *flesh and blood* is where truth is found. It states that miracles that go against Halachah are from false prophets and that God's Wisdom isn't in heaven but it has come to earth on Mount Sinai. Therefore, Eleazer must be a false prophet. In other words we see that the Talmud has kicked God and the Holy Spirit out of the equation. Rabbi Joshua even goes so far to say that even God cannot challenge "majority rules." Even if God would want to send an angel or perform miracles, God Himself can not go against what the rabbis say. The very system of the rabbis in the Talmud has made it impossible for the Jews to hear truth from the Scripture. Also in regards to flesh and blood being where truth is found, the exact opposite is stated in the Bible, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, [literally flesh and blood] but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." This is the language of the Pharisees. They would bind the community by their *Halachah* but Jesus is saying Truth comes from heaven, not through reason and logic (Greek philosophy still found in society today).

Therefore, the problem with witnessing to a Jew is this. If we tell a Jew Isaiah 53 refers to Jesus they go to Rabbi who will tell them what the "majority" says that Isaiah 53 talks about and that is it. The system doesn't allow God to work. It is very possible God was literally trying to intervene for Eleazer but it didn't matter. When Paul was writing this system wasn't in effect. The Pharisees bought into Greek philosophy of reasoning and wisdom and thus a sign isn't important to a Jew anymore. For a Jew to become a believer he has to break out of the system.

I also want to give some background as to why the church feels the way they do about the Jew. To do so we must look at the early Messianic church around 100 AD. In extra-Biblical writings we see that James became very popular and well known as a leader of the zealots and is killed. Simon (cousin of Yeshua) took his place and led the Nazarenes (Messianic Jews) out of Jerusalem to Pella when the Romans came in 70 AD.

In the early Jewish Synagogues there was a main ruler called the Nasi. James would have been like the Nasi or ruler within the church. In Acts 15 Paul and Barnabas were arguing but when they finished, James spoke up in verse 19 to make a final ruling. James was the brother of Jesus and a descendant of David, just like the Nasi would have been. Later we see the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) which was comprised of apostles and elders. They would make rulings and send letters out to the community, both oral and written, which is also what the Jewish Sanhedrin did. Therefore, we are seeing a very Jewish early church, which makes sense since it was Jewish at this time. In Acts we see how James seems to be in leadership as the whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up: “‘Brothers, listen to me.’ Simon has described to us how God at first showed His concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for Himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: ‘After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear My name, says the Lord, who does these things' that have been known for ages. ‘It is *my judgment*, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God” (Acts 15:12-20). James made the final judgment here.

Until 133 AD there were bishops that lead the church in Jerusalem. Once the Gentiles had been welcomed into the church the dynamics changed drastically. Before this happens, however, we read in Acts, “Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. 14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, [high concentration of Jews here] and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. . . Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, ‘*Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen*’. . . When the Jews saw the crowds they were filled with jealousy. . . Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the **Jews** and **devout proselytes** followed Paul. . . We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’ Now when the **Gentiles** heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord” (Acts 13:13-48). Notice that there were three groups of people here, the Jews, Gentile God fearers and Proselytes. Also, we must ask why were the Gentiles glad? It wasn’t just the salvation message because Paul had already been telling them that it was for them as well. First we must understand that during this time the Gentiles were permitted in the Synagogue but they were not considered first class citizens so they didn’t have the same rights the others did. They weren’t Proselytes who went through all the rigmarole to become a Jew so they were just lower class citizens. This is why in verse 48 the Gentiles were glad when Paul invited them in because they would become co-heirs, or first class citizens. This arrogance was causing a great division among the church. You see the Jews were considered atheists by the Romans but they still allowed them to have a certain status within their borders because there were so many of them. When the Gentiles participated in the synagogue they had to pay the temple tax etc. This meant more money, however, when Paul preached and made them co-heirs they would no longer have to pay the money and it also began to allow Gentiles to be freed from some of the Jewish community rules. The result was to be increased persecution of the Jews by the Romans which in turn made any attachment to the Jewish community less attractive to the Gentile.

As a result of this growing split between the Jew and Gentile, there was a prayer added in the early 90’s by the Rabbis called the *Birkhat Haminim* (curse against the heretics). It basically said that anyone who didn’t follow their version of the Jewish faith, especially the Nazarenes who followed Jesus, were to be kicked out of their Jewish communities. In fact, it is quite possible that the book of Hebrews was written to these people encouraging them to hang in there. During this time the Gospel was spreading, but most of growth was from Gentiles causing the split to grow even more until soon the Gentiles were looking down upon the Jews.

Because of this split, we see the early church fathers were really anti-Christian when it came to their attitude about the Jew. Let’s look at some of the early church father’s writings:

Ignatius (Bishop of Antioch or Northern Syria today) wrote a letter to one of the churches in the area about 107 AD where he said, "If we conform to Judaism, then we have not received grace." He then urged them not to do the Sabbath saying, "It is absurd to have Jesus Christ on the lips and at the same time to live like a Jew. No Christianity didn't believe in Judaism but Judaism believed in Christianity. And in its bosom was assembled everyone professing faith in God." Granted, I agree that a Christian should not conform to Judaism, but not to honor a commandment of God? Even here by 107 AD the idea was coming out that you could not be a Jew and a Christian. Because of these conflicts and the Jews removing believers in Christ out of the community, those who followed Jesus and wanted to keep their Jewish heritage were caught between a rock and a hard place.

We also must look at the Epistle of Barnabas, which is believed to be pseudonymous, that is that Barnabas did not write it himself. This was written between 96-98 AD for the Jews who believed in the Messiah. It states, "The Jews lost their covenant forever when Moses destroyed the Tablets on Mount Sinai. Jesus is for the Gentiles who are the true recipients of God's covenant. Not the Jews. The keeping of the New Moons are abolished, as well as other Jewish law. There is only one Law, the Law of Jesus Christ." I certainly can't find this in the Scriptures anywhere. In fact, I see the opposite stated.

Justin Martyr (1st of early church fathers 130's -140's) wrote two major theological treatises, the 1st and 2nd apologies. He was writing among a world with three competing philosophies, Greek pagan philosophy, Jews, and Christianity. His purpose was to build a theology stating what we should believe and why. It was very lengthy but had 4 pivotal events in history for his theology that are still accepted today as the basis of our faith. They were as follows:

1. Creation: Gen 1-2,
2. Fall: Man introduces his own will. Gen 3
3. Redemption in Christ: Restore human condition from the Fall. Matthew.
4. Consummation through Christ's return. Revelation.

The problem with this is it eliminates most of the Bible and God's covenant to Israel which leads us to replacement theology, that God has replaced Israel with Gentiles. This certainly isn't Biblical.

It is unclear if this really happened but Justin Martyr was supposedly in Ephesus waiting to board a ship when some Jews came who were fleeing the Bar Kokbah revolt. Martyr met one of these Jews named Trypho and he got into a debate with him over the Messiah. Martyr said that there were three significant aspects of the rest of the Scripture. 1) prophecies pointing to Christ 2) Scripture points to universal moral code for every believer, 3) remainder was written to the Jews which is no longer useful. He went on to say that the God of Israel is among the church rather than Jews and that the church is the climax of the purpose of creation. Therefore, God's relationship with the physical Jew had ended and the spiritual relationship with the church has begun. He said, "God instituted circumcision so you and you only might suffer the infliction due those who crucified Christ. Since circumcision of the flesh is the mark you can be distinguished from other men." Again, Martyr was denying what the Scriptures say about the covenant and its relationship to the church as outlined in Romans 9-11. (Bible says circumcision was a sign of the covenant so Martyr is wrong). In any case, this prejudice begins the institution of Christianity which totally separates itself from the Jewish World, not because the Scriptures merited it, but because of the cultural hatred for the Jew.

Things begin to spiral downward from here because ideas were introduced, discussed and adopted which led to action and behavior. To compound the problem, the early church was dealing with a series of heresies. One was Gnosticism, which said there was a material world and a spiritual one and the spiritual world was more valuable and meaningful. This idea began to invade Christian theology as well. For example, Marcion (200 AD) was one of these heretical bishops who believed there were two Gods. The Old Testament god and the New Testament god. He said that the N.T. god was greater and dealt with the spiritual while the O.T. god dealt with the materialistic realm. As a result, two MAJOR church fathers responded to Marcion by attacking this false idea of two gods, however, they also attacked the JEWS.

One of these church fathers was Tertullian (200 AD). He said the God of Jesus Christ is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and there is no other. He explained the differences in the old and new by saying, “The commandments of the Torah are degrading and unworthy of an enlightened people. They were given to the Jews to curb idolatry and greed, which was unique to them, not shared by the rest of the human race. Their trail of crimes culminated in the killing of Christ. Jews were always unworthy of election. Now they have lost it. God’s choice is now transferred to the Gentiles who are capable at living at a higher level than the Jews.” Isn’t it ironic that the Jews were the only monotheistic nation throughout history, yet he calls them unworthy? Another church father was Irenaeus (200 AD) who reconciled the two testaments by saying God’s history with man was continuous from creation to the end and that His purpose hadn’t changed. He said, “God chose the Jews in order to prepare them for Christ but they rejected and murdered Him. Because the Jews rejected Jesus, God granted their inheritance to Gentiles alone. Jews who boast of being Israel are disinherited from the grace of God. Jews are no longer useful.” Does this sound like the words of Christ to you? It simply contradicts both Old and New Testament theology, yet these are our early church fathers and the thinking that brought about some of our theology today. Don’t get me wrong. I’m not saying that these men didn’t have truth and do a lot of good for Christianity. I simply want to point out a bias that reveals why the church is so unaware of the Jewishness of the Scriptures. Anything that was “Jewish” was rejected and reinterpreted. Therefore, all the gems that God gave the Jew that point to the Messiah, and that they recorded down for us to see today, have been ignored.

This attitude toward the Jew continued throughout history as we see Origen (185-254), who was a good Christian man with erroneous prophetic views, laid the theological foundation for evil men (like Hitler) later. He harmonized the Bible with Plato’s philosophy and came up with the allegorical method of interpreting the Bible; especially in areas of prophecy. The result was that church leaders didn’t see Jews as a distinct people because they saw that the Church had replaced them. According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica* the affects are stated: “The church being God’s true Israel according to the Spirit, the Jewish people no longer had any vocation or reason to exist” (vol 5, pg 507). Later Eusebius wrote *Ecclesiastical History* in 300 AD that covered the time period from the Apostles to 300 AD. This is the authoritative church history used in seminaries today. In it he comments on the Jewish communities living in Palestine, Syria, Cyprus and Babylon and states that the Jews have no merit and are a threat to the church. Eusebius even said that at the festival of Purim Jews sacrifice Christians in rebellion against Jesus. Of course this wasn’t true, however, during this time the Romans were very anti-Semitic and had crazy stories too. These type of comments by Eusebius were later used to trump up charges against the Jews for later persecution against them. It also causes canons to be made saying, “if any clergyman shall enter into a synagogue of Jews or heretics [Nazarenes] to pray let him be deposed, if a laymen does this, let him be excommunicated.” It virtually made it impossible to witness to them.

Also in 300's there was a renunciation new converts had to make if they were from a Jewish background. They had to: "Confess and denounce verbally the whole Hebrew people and forthwith declare with a whole heart and sincere faith that he desires to be received among the Christians. He must say the following: 'I renounce all customs rites, legalisms unleavened breads and sacrifices of lambs of the Hebrew and all the other feasts of the Hebrews, sacrifices, prayers aspersions, purifications, sanctifications and propitiations fasts and new moons and sabbaths and superstitions and hymns and chants and observances and synagogues and food and drink of the Hebrews. In one word I renounce everything Jewish.'" Likewise, there were the Clementine Recognitions in the 300's from the Eastern Church. If a Jew became a Christian he had to say: "I renounce the whole worship of the Hebrews, circumcision, all its legalisms, unleavened bread, Passover, sacrifices of lambs, feast of weeks, trumpets, jubilees, atonement, tabernacles and all other Hebrew feasts, sacrifices prayers, aspersions, purifications expiations fasts sabbath new moons foods and drinks and I absolutely renounce every custom and institution of the Jewish Laws." Again, how could a Jew who believed in Jesus continue to follow what God commanded them to do without persecution? This left them with no place to turn.

Then Emperor Constantine "converted" to Christianity in 313 and made it the official State Religion. In order to rid Christianity of anything Jewish he: 1) Changed the days of the week and months, naming them after pagan gods (Tuesday for Tow, Wednesday for Woden, Thursday for Thor, Friday for Frey, Saturday for Saturn and Sunday for the Sun). 2) Changed the Sabbath to "Sun"day for Mithras the sun god. 3) Forbid Jews to keep the festivals and replaced them with Easter and Christmas, formally pagan holidays. Once Rome was forced to become "Christian" the only people who weren't were the Jews, which obviously caused problems. Therefore, in 325 AD the Council of Nicea met. The focus was Arianism which said Yeshua was not Divine but they also decided that Easter would no longer be connected with Passover. They said, "For it is unbecoming beyond measure that on this holiest of festivals we should follow the customs of the Jews. Henceforth let us have nothing in common with this odious people." We have seen how the Jews never instituted Passover, it was God who did that, and He said it was to be an "ordinance forever." God even says the Christians will celebrate Passover at His return (Zech 14), so this ruling from the Nicene council can not be Biblical or Christian.

We also see the father of the Eastern Orthodox Church was John Chrysostom. He was known as the bishop with a golden tongue and was from Constantinople which was the most power church of this time because it was the center of the Roman empire. He wrote a series of sermons against the Jews and advocated Jewish persecution. He even said, "The Jews are the most worthless of all men they are wretches, greedy, rapacious. They are perfidious murders of Christ, they worship the devil, their religion is a sickness. The Jews are the odious murderers of Christ and for killing God there is no expiation possible. No indulgence or pardon. Christians may never cease vengeance and the Jews must live in servitude forever God always hated the Jews. It is incumbent upon all Christians to hate the Jews." My only response to this heresy comes from the Bible, something that you will notice they never quote to support their bias. We read in Romans, "And if some of the branches [Jew] were broken off, and you [Gentiles], being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root [covenant of Jesus] and fatness of the olive tree, *do not boast against the branches*. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, 'Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.' Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. *Otherwise you also will be cut off*. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for *God is able to graft them in again*. . . For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness *in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And *He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them*, When I take away their sins" (Rom 11:17-27). Also, "The people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen" (Rom 9:4-5). And, "What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all!" (Rom 3:1-4).

Unfortunately, Chrysostom was successful and the christian masses began to attack synagogues for the first time. They tortured, persecuted and killed Jews and burned down their buildings. In the west it wasn't any better. One of Chrysostoms contemporaries was St Ambrose from Milan Italy. Once there was a synagogue destroyed under a Christian emperor of Rome. When the new pagan emperor took over (Theodosius) he demanded the synagogue be rebuilt so Ambrose wrote a letter saying: "I hereby declare that it was I who set fire to the synagogue. Indeed, I gave the orders for it to be done so that there should no longer be any place where Christ is denied."

St Gregory of Nyssa in the west also wrote about the Jews saying: "Assassins of the prophets, companions of devil, a race of vipers, a Sanhedrin of demons, enemies of all that is beautiful, in their lude grossness." You can see how the tables had turned and now Christians hated Jews even more than other pagan rituals.

By the time of Augustine (410-420) there was a slightly different perspective. It wasn't good but it wasn't as crazy. (A contemporary of Augustine at this time was St. Jerome who translated the Bible into Latin. He too was extremely anti-Semitic). Augustine thought the Jews needed to be left alone as an example of what God does to those who reject Jesus. This became the prevailing view for next 500-600 years. Although Jewish rights were already being taken away and they were being excluded from politics.

Later, Emperor Justinian (527-565) issued a permanent Christian State Policy which said, "They [Jews] shall enjoy no honors. Their status shall reflect the baseness which in their souls they have elected and desired." There were Jewish believers in the Messiah at this time but no writings have survived intact. The Jews continued to be labeled and denied the Gospel and no reconsideration of this perspective occurred for another 1000 years, even then, it was short-lived. During this time there were many persecutions and trials for the Jew.

By 1517 the German Martin Luther was posting his 95 Thesis, an appropriate condemnation of what was going on in the Catholic Church at the time. Luther was very popular and the people rose up to protect him. In the early stages he was pro-Jewish and formed a mission agency to reach the Jews. He even wrote a tract in 1523 called, "Jesus was a Jew by birth" where he challenged the church to recognize who Jesus was. He said, "For are fools the Popes, the bishops, the sophists and the monks. These course donkey heads have hitherto treated the Jews in such a way that a good Christian could welter into a Jew. And if I were a Jew and saw such stupid rascals as these leading the Christian faith and giving instruction in it, I would sooner be turned into a swine than a Christian." Luther hit the nail right on the head. The problem was that when he saw the Jews weren't responding to the Gospel he changed his tune. Because the Gospel Luther preached wasn't accepted by the Jews any more than the Catholic Gospel was, he wrote a tract called, "*On the Jews and their Lies*" in 1543, just a few years before he dies. This is what is said: "What should we Christians do with that rejected and accursed people the Jews whom we cannot suffer, who are among us. And we know so many of their lies, abusings and curses. I shall offer my faithful suggestion. First, that we burn their synagogues with fire and what cannot be burned will be buried with earth so that no man will ever more be able to see any stone or remnant of it. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom. Secondly, it is necessary to uproot and destroy their houses in the same way. Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings. . . Be taken away from them. Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb. Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jew. Since there we find they do the same as in their synagogues or house. . . in order that they may know that they are not lords in our land as they claim but in exile and captivity. Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them, and put aside for safe keeping. . . Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade or a spindle into the hand of young strong Jews and Jewesses. . . Let us therefore use the simple wisdom of other peoples like those of France, Spain and Bohemia and expel them from the land forever. . . " The Encyclopedia Judaica sums it up correctly when speaking about this tract, "Short of the Auschwitz oven and extermination, the whole Nazi Holocaust is pre-outlined here." Is it any wonder that Adolf Hitler cited Martin Luther in *Mein Kampf* as one of the great heroes of the German people. Also the infamous Nazi war criminal Julius Streicher quoted Luther in his defense at the Nuremburg trials.

Herein lies another problem that is being unraveled here. Today, each denomination seems to have a church father through which they interpret the Scriptures. Lutherans will quote Luther from the 1500's, Calvinists quote the Council of Dort and others from the 1600's, some quote the Nicea Council from the 300's. The problem is, none of them go back far enough. Look at our country and see how far the church has fallen in the last 100 years. Don't you think the apostolic church had fallen quite a ways in 300 years, let alone 1600 years? History reveals that it had. In order to understand the Bible as it was intended, we must go back to Christ and even into the period of the Old Testament. In essence, we go to the Bible and let the Holy Spirit speak as Scripture will interpret Scripture. As discussed earlier, it was the Nicea Council that took the authority of doctrine away from God and placed it in the hands of men and the church.

How should WE respond to this church history? First I believe we need to pray and repent of this ungodly heritage that prevents the kingdom from being fully established. This has been a stronghold that needs to be brought down. We must face the fact that Judaism is based upon the teachings of the Rabbis, but Christianity is based upon the teachings of the church fathers. To say Christianity is based on the N.T. is to say Judaism is based on the O.T. This is Wrong!! Judaism is based on the Talmud which filters the O.T. through it. Christianity is based on the institution of the church fathers with the N.T. filtered through it. We believe what we've been taught to believe. Both are incorrect foundations for us to get doctrine. Only the Bible should interpret the Bible. Once more, I am not saying these church fathers were evil, simply that they were a product of their culture, however, that doesn't make it right does it. I show you this because it is imperative to understand why things like Passover and the Biblical Festivals have been rejected. It has nothing to do with the Bible and the truth of the Festival, but a bias against the Jew that has kept us from seeing these truths.

WHO IS A JEW?

This may be a shocking section to read because of the truth you may find here so read carefully. We know that the Jews entered the land the promised land as 12 tribes. Around 1050 BC we see the Kings of Israel ruling with Saul being the first king, then David, then Solomon. David was the model of kingship, even the Messiah was to be like King David, or vice-versa. Israel was a world power for about 80 years starting with David. However, when his son Solomon became king he took many foreign wives and brought idolatry into Israel. Solomon's son Rehoboam learned from this example and when he became king, he started a civil war. The 12 tribes split into 2 kingdoms, the Northern and Southern Kingdom. The North was called Israel or Ephraim while the South was called Judah. The Old Testament reflects these two groups by calling them such. Out of the 19 kings of Israel, none of them followed God. Out of the 20 kings of Judah, 8 follow the Lord. We see the prophets Amos, Hosea, Elijah and Elisha spoke to the kings of Israel, while Jeremiah, Isaiah, Micah and Ezekiel spoke to the kings of Judah.

This national split weakened the 12 tribes of Israel. Around 900 BC nations began to attack them. Aram, with Damascus as its center (Today's Syria), made an alliance with the Northern ten tribes. As a result God brought about prophets to rebuke them for this (Elijah, Elisha). Later, Assyria (Asshur in Hebrew & today's Northern Iraq) with Nineveh as its capital, rose up around 800 BC and began to move west towards Israel.

Aram and Israel allied in the mid 700's and they tried to invade Judah but they were unsuccessful because God was with them due to the fact that there was some good within them. God encouraged Judah and predicted Ephraim's fall (Israel) by the Assyrians because of this. We see this in Isaiah, "The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah — he will bring the king of Assyria" (Isa 7:17). By 732 Aram was destroyed and by 722 BC Israel was defeated and scattered throughout the land. Assyria had transplanted other nations in place of the land of the 10 tribes. These ten tribes of Israel became lost and almost completely lost their identity. In fact, many are being rediscovered today. However, there were a small few of these ten tribes that joined Judah. Therefore, after 722 BC, when we talk about Jews, we are primarily talking about the two tribes called Judah in the Bible with a few stragglers that had joined them in Jerusalem.

Because of this split and the lost tribes of Israel, we see much of the Scripture talking about a time of restoration. Ezekiel 37 is one such example where God says these 12 tribes will be reunited again. This is why the Bible still calls it the land of Israel, not the land of Judah.

God predicted that this would happen long before they entered the promised land. When Jacob was prophetically blessing Joseph's sons he crossed his arms to bless the younger and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations" (Gen 48:19-20). The word "nations" here is *Goyim*, which is translated Gentiles. In other words, Ephraim would become a group of gentiles. That is exactly what happened when Assyria conquered the 10 tribes and assimilated them into the lands around them. These tribes lost their identity and became known as Gentiles. In fact, in the New Testament you may recall the Samaritans which were hated by the Jews. Samaritans were some of these lost tribes who has been assimilated into other cultures. The Jews no longer viewed them as Jews, yet their blood line clearly showed they were Jews. Ironically, even Jews today say just because there is no bloodline doesn't mean your not a Jew. They say if you embrace Judaism (TRUE JUDAISM, NOT LEGALISM BUT THE COVENANT) you are a Jew. This is as the Scriptures tell us that it is not the seed of Abraham that makes you a Jew, but the faith of Abraham that makes you a Jew.

Understanding this history we see that Jesus came to begin the restoration of the 12 tribes. Consider some of these many examples:

- Ezek 34:2-13 "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? . . . I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. . . *I Myself will search for My sheep* and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after My sheep. *I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered* on a day of clouds and darkness. *I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land*"

- Ezek 36:24-25 "For I will take you from among the heathen, and *gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land*. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

• 1 Peter 1:1-2 “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, *to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

• John 11:51-53 “He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that *Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.*”

• Gen 48:19 “And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall *become a multitude of nations.* (melo goyim) fullness of Gentiles.”

• Hos 1:9 “Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for *ye are not My people*, and I will not be your God.” Keep in mind he was speaking to the Jews here who would reject Him.

• Hos 8:8 “Israel is swallowed up: *now shall they be among the Gentiles* as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.”

• Rom 9:26 “And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*”

• John 10:16 “And *other sheep I have, which are not of this fold*: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and *there shall be one fold*, and one shepherd.”

• Jer 31:18 “I have surely heard *Ephraim's moaning*: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. *Restore me, and I will return*, because you are the LORD my God. After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth.”

• Isa 11:13 “The *envy also of Ephraim shall depart*, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.”

• Rom 11:25-30 “I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: *Israel has experienced a hardening in part* until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.’ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and His call are irrevocable”

• Ezek 47:21-23 “You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the *aliens who have settled among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites*; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. *In whatever tribe the alien settles, there you are to give him his inheritance*, declares the Sovereign LORD.” Also Ezek 48:31.

• Zech 8:13 “And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong.”

• Amos 9:9 “For, lo, I will command, and *I will sift the house of Israel among all nations*, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

- Num 9:14 “And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the Passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the Passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.”

- Isa 56:3-8 “Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep My sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and *take hold of My covenant*; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, *that join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him*, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and *taketh hold of My covenant*; Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord GOD *which gathereth the outcasts of Israel* saith, Yet will I gather others to Him, beside those that are gathered unto Him.”

- Ex 12:48 “And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.”

- Lev 19:34 “But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

- Isa 14:1 “The LORD will have compassion on Jacob; *once again He will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land*. Aliens [non Jews] will join them and *unite with the house of Jacob*.”

- Matt 15:24 “He answered, ‘*I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel*’”

- Gal 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- Heb 12:16,22,23 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. . . But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. And Ex 4:22-23 Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: *Israel is my firstborn son*.’”

- Rev 21:12-13 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. [If all believers have to go through their tribal gate, what about Job, Noah, Adam? What gate will you go through?]

The point of all these verses is to show you that some Gentiles out in the world may actually be Jews. Jesus came for the “lost sheep of Israel” who had been scattered and lost into the world. He continues to search for them today. There are those who take this truth too far and say that just because you believe, you must be one of the lost tribes that God has found. This is inconsistent with the Bible. Among the above verses you should have seen many verses talking about aliens joining Israel and Judah. Those would be true Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth that joined Israel and became like “native born” Israel because of their faith in God. This is what it means to have the faith of Abraham, you join the house of Israel through faith in God’s covenant brought about through His son Jesus Christ. Therefore, one can NOT say that just because you believe in Jesus you are one of the lost tribes.

We must also look at some of the objections to the lost tribes idea. In 2 Chronicles we see “At the king's command, couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and from his officials, which read: ‘People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that He may return to you who are left, *who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria*. . . Although most of the many people who came from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover, contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them” (2 Chron 30:5-6,18). In other words, there were some of a few of the other tribes who had joined Judah, however, not all 12 tribes were united yet. We also see in the New Testament, “This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night” (Acts 26:7). Also in James, “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.” However, this does not necessarily mean that there were known people from each of the 12 tribes, but perhaps they were writing to those who were still considered Gentiles but known by God. But we also see in the New Testament, “There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the *tribe of Asher*” (Luke 2:36). Therefore, even though most of the Jews at Christ’s time were from the tribe of Judah or Benjamin, there were others who had been preserved by God. However, this does not negate the fact that Jesus came for the Jew and it was their rejection of Him that allowed the door to be opened wide for all to come in, even those of Israel who had been lost. The real point of all of this, however, is to make people realize that while some may be anti-semitic, they may be prejudice against themselves because there can be no question that some Jews have become what we would call Gentiles. In other words, YOU may be a Jew and not know it. They have been lost, but as the Scriptures promise, they will be found and united together again. As we saw in Revelation, there is no question that the 12 tribes will be identified in the New Jerusalem and we will ALL be assigned a tribe because it is the Jewish covenant that we have been granted access to through Jesus. Thanks be to God! As far as the Old Testament teaching on the NEW COVENANT is concerned, the covenant was made with the Jewish people. Remember, “For if their [the Jew] *rejection* is the reconciliation of the world, what will their *acceptance* be but life from the dead?” (Rom 11:15).

TWO PASSEOVERS

We read in Numbers how God made a special provision for anyone who was unclean and could not celebrate the Passover on its normal time of the 14th of the first month (Nisan). Keep in mind that it was not sinful to be unclean, it simply kept you from participating in the Temple rites and festivals. We read, “But some of them could not celebrate the Passover on that day because they were ceremonially unclean on account of a dead body. So they came to Moses . . . Moses answered them, ‘Wait until I find out what the LORD commands concerning you.’ Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Tell the Israelites: “When any of you or your descendants are unclean because of a dead body or are away on a journey, they may still celebrate the LORD's Passover. They are to celebrate it on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight”’” (Num 9:6-11). We see these people were unclean because they had come into contact with a dead body. We also know that purification from a dead body took 7 days (Num 11:11-16). The tradition of Rabbis records that it was the body of Joseph that had been carried with them, was what made these men unclean. Remember that Joseph prefigures Christ as we have discussed earlier.

So why is this important? You may recall that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (*Nakdimon ben Gurion*), who were both members of the Sanhedrin, voluntarily became unclean to touch the body of Jesus, therefore, they would not be able to participate in the Passover meal at its regular time. These men were wealthy and certainly could have had their servants take care of the body but they didn't, choosing to give up their own right to celebrate the Passover. It is very possible that these two men got together a month later to celebrate our risen Lord during this second Passover. Today there is no Temple and thus the Passover sacrifice is no longer done, which is fitting since Jesus is our Passover sacrifice. Therefore, Joseph and Nicodemus would have fully understood there was no more need for a Passover lamb because Jesus was that Lamb. In fact, many Messianic communities still honor the second Passover today to honor Joseph and Nicodemus who most likely came together.

This also applies to us because even though we are unclean or outside of Jerusalem, we may keep the Passover as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did because there is no longer any sacrifice involved because Jesus fulfilled that portion. We read some of the regulations about the Passover lamb in Numbers, “They must not leave any of it till morning or break any of its bones. When they celebrate the Passover, they must follow all the regulations” (Num 9:12). We can see how Jesus even fulfilled this minute details of this festival to be our Passover Lamb: ““Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken’” (John 19:31-36). With Jesus being our Passover Lamb, that regulation has been kept and now if we eat lamb at Passover, it is not a sacrifice, but a symbol to remember THE sacrifice.

THE TRUMPET CALL PREFIGURES THE MESSIAH

Num 9:15-18 - 10:5 “That is how it continued to be; the cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire. Whenever the cloud lifted from above the Tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped. . . When a trumpet blast is sounded, the tribes camping on the east are to set out.” So what did this trumpet sound like? There are three distinct sounds made by the trumpet:

1. Teruah: (long trumpet blast) signaling it was time to leave.
2. Tekia: (staccato trumpet blast) Time to come together.
3. Combination of blasts: Began Sabbath, War etc.

The Rabbis taught, “Six blasts were blown on Friday evening before the Sabbath. The first one warned people to cease working in the fields. The second one warned people in the city to cease working. The third warned people to kindle their Sabbath lights. . . [finally the last three] a *tekiah*, *teruah*, and a *tekiah* were blown to mark the onset of the Sabbath.” (b.Shabbat 35b). In fact, in archaeology they have uncovered a stone from the second Temple with the writing: “to the place of the trumpeting,” and it is believed the rest said, “for the priests.” It is believed that this was the stone from which these trumpet blasts were blown.

We see Biblically that it was a combination of God’s presence in the cloud beginning to move and the trumpet call which marked an appointed time. Both point us to the second coming as well, which will be a great Sabbath for the Messianic era. It will be a time of divine war and an assembling of the congregation of God’s people. We read of the Lord’s return in the clouds in Daniel: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven” (Dan 7:13).

Interestingly, the sages in the Talmud called the Messiah *Bar Naphle*. This name means, “Son of the Clouds.” Likewise, the Targum calls the Messiah *Anani*, meaning “He of the clouds” who was to reveal Himself. This is consistent with what we read of Jesus, “At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:27-28). Also, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). In Revelation we read, “Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him” (Rev 1:7).

There are also many verses showing the connection with this trumpet call and the Lord’s return: “For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet (*teruah*) call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess 4:16-17). We see Paul tell us it will happen “At the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable” (1 Cor 15:52), and in Revelation we read, “On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet” (Rev 1:10-11).

Clearly, the cloud and trumpet that lead Israel in the wilderness prefigures the second coming of Christ, the Messiah. The Jews are very familiar with this sound. Are you?

A THREE DAY JOURNEY AHEAD OF US

“So they set out from the mountain of the LORD and traveled for three days. The ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them during those three days to find them a place to rest” (Num 10:33-34). The word for “resting place” is *menuchah* and is often used as a word for a Sabbath rest. Isn’t it interesting that Christ traveled three days ahead of us by means of His death and resurrection. In other words, He took a three day journey to “prepare a place for us” (John 14:2-3). As we read in Hebrews “Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, ‘So I declared on oath in My anger, They shall never enter My rest. (*menuchah*)’” (Heb 4:3). Therefore, just as the Lord went ahead of Israel to find them a resting place, Jesus also took three days to go ahead of us and prepare a resting place for us. We look forward to that rest and are patient for its arrival.

REJECTING MANNA FROM HEAVEN

“You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, but for a whole month--until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it--because you have rejected the LORD, who is among you, and have wailed before Him, saying, ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt?’” (Num 11:18-20). The Hebrew word for “meat” that is referred to here in this text is *basar* and it is the same word used for “flesh.” The Jews had expected the Messiah to make manna descend when He came just as Moses had done when he delivered Israel. Jesus fulfills this expectation with the loaves and fish when he fed the 4,000 and again feeding the 5,000. However, after this great miracle the Jews wanted more as we see them ask in John 6:30-31: “What miraculous sign then will You give that we may see it and believe You? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” How did Jesus respond? He pointed them to spiritual nourishment by identifying Himself as the manna saying, “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven” (John 6:51). The Jews were looking for the manna to come down from heaven, but their preconceived notions kept them from seeing it.

The problem was, they weren’t happy with the answer Jesus gave them. Just as they rejected the manna in Numbers they rejected this manna in Christ saying: “Is not this Yeshua, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down out of heaven?’” In other words, they were saying, “He did not come from heaven.” They knew only His flesh and this confused them because they could not understand that Jesus was talking about heavenly things. As a result Israel rejected the manna from heaven because they were only focused on the *basar* (flesh). Likewise, many rejected the Messiah for the same reasons. This is why Jesus rebuked them saying, “The flesh profits nothing” (John 6:63) and “What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?” (John 6:62). Sadly, since these men were looking only for earthly meat, “many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore” (John 6:66). We, too, must realize that the flesh profits nothing and that though we may suffer in this world for a time, there is heavenly food waiting that will nourish us into an eternity.

SENDING OUT OF THE 12

In Numbers 13:1-2 we read, “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders’” As we later see, they came back and gave a bad report so that the rest of the Israelites refused to enter the land. God punished an entire generation for this lack of faith by banning everyone over 20 years old from entering the land 40 years later.

In Hebrew someone who is sent to carry out a mission is called a *shaliach* (sent one), which in Greek is *apostolos* (apostle). When Jesus sent out His disciples they became apostles by virtue of being sent out. Therefore, the 12 spies could be regarded as 12 apostles to Canaan. Interestingly, after sending out the spies the men’s names are listed (Num 13) just like with the disciples being sent out: “He called His twelve *disciples* to Him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve *apostles*: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him” (Matt 10:1-4). Did you see the transition from “disciples” to “apostles?”

What was the result of the sending out of the 12 in the book of Numbers? It ends with a generation doomed because when the 12 spies returned after 40 days God sentenced them to 40 years in the desert. An interesting side note is that by Jewish reckoning, the punishment was given on the ninth day of the fifth month (Av). This is a famous day throughout history for it is this same day that the Temple was destroyed both times. Jesus also warned the disciples in the New Testament that theirs was a doomed generation:

- “This generation is a wicked generation” (Luke 11:29).
- “The blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world will be charged against this generation” (Luke 11:50)
- Jesus said He must, “suffer many things and be rejected by this generation” (Luke 17:25).
- “I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things [judgment] have happened” (Luke 21:32).
- “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation” (Acts 2:40-41)

In about 30 AD Jesus told His disciples to go forth again as apostles for the Gospel. 40 years later (one generation) on the ninth day of Av, the anniversary of the day the spies gave the evil report, the Romans burned the city of Jerusalem, beginning a 2000 year exile continuing to this very day. Therefore, just as the result of the 12 spies was a doomed generation for 40 years, when the disciples were sent out and the Jews rejected their Messiah, it resulted in a doomed generation, in which 40 years later would lose their temple.

The discourse to the spies gives instructions for their mission, things to take note of and things to accomplish just as in Matthew 10 Jesus tells the disciples (Luke 22:36). Also, Jesus sends the 12 disciples out in pairs to the lost sheep of Israel, warning them not to go “in the way of the Gentiles” (Mat 10:5) but to be confined to the land of Israel. Although the Bible doesn’t say for sure, it seems the 12 spies may have been in pairs as well. There is a slight indication of this with Joshua and Caleb being paired up, there were two men carrying grapes, and 40 years later it was in pairs that they were sent into Jericho where Rahab helped them.

In addition, there were 2 spies (Hoshea and Caleb) who were obedient in going ahead into the promised land. Moses renamed Hoshea by adding the letter *yod* to the front of his name so that “Hoshea” which meant, “Salvation,” became, “Joshua” which means, “The Lord saves.” This could foreshadow, Jesus obediently going ahead of us to our promised land. Yeshua is really the same name as Joshua. When Joshua appears in Aramaic it is Yeshua, a shortened version of Yehoshua. Jesus is a transliteration of a transliteration of His Hebrew name, Yeshua. When Yeshuah is translated into Greek, the closest phonetic term is Iesous (YAY-soos). The “oos” ending indicates to the Greek reader that the name belongs to a man. When the Roman church translated the Bible into Latin, they transliterated the Greek transliteration of Yeshua into Latin as well. As Latin is transliterated into English the consonant Y is often read as J and the name becomes Jaysoos, which we pronounce Jesus.

Just an interesting side note: The Talmud connects Joshua’s name change with Sarai’s name change to Sarah where we see God removed the letter *yod* from Sarai and added the letter *heh* to spell Sarah. The Sages explain that God took the *yod* from the end of Sarai’s name and put it in front of Joshua’s: “The letter *yod* which I took from Sarai’s name cried out continuously through the years until Joshua came and I added it to his name, as it is written, “Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.” (Sanhedrin 107a). God said to the *yod* that He had taken away from mother Sarah, “I will place you at the beginning of a man’s name” (y.Sanhedrin 2:6).

After the Israelites had rebelled God was angry with them and was determined to wipe them off the face of the earth (Num 14:12). However, Moses interceded for them referring back to God’s attributes shown him on Mount Sinai earlier. He reasoned with God saying that if He wiped the Israelites off the face of the earth, the rest of the world would say God couldn’t save them, making God look impotent. Ironically, there are many today who deny God’s power and are saying the same thing: “God can’t save the Jew today.” God has promised to redeem them in the last days so it will happen, we need only wait to see how God moves. Moses said, “In accordance with Your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as You have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now.” The LORD replied, “I have forgiven them, as you asked” (Num 14:19-20). God was about to destroy the Israelites and Moses intercedes as he did after the golden calf incident. Moses, like Yeshua, averts the wrath of God from falling upon the people, showing one more reason Moses prefigures Christ. Though the Jew has been exiled today, there is an intercessor who is interceding for them, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the God of Israel who came in the flesh. God will hear this intercession.

AARON’S BUDDING STAFF

We read in Numbers 17:2-5 "Speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their ancestral tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff. On the staff of Levi write Aaron's name, for there must be one staff for the head of each ancestral tribe. Place them in the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony, where I meet with you. The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites." In this account of Aarons staff budding, we typically think of God choosing Aaron over the other Levites to be the high priest and we stop thinking from there. However, there is much more meaning in this passage than most realize.

First, the tribal staffs were significant because they represented the tribe itself. However, interestingly, the word for staff and tribe are the same Hebrew word, *mateh*. We see that Aaron was made head over only the tribe of Levi, while Moses was the head over all of Israel.

To understand this fully, we want to back up a bit to the previous chapter where we read that Korah, Dathan and Abiram begin rebelling against Moses and Aaron. It was for this reason that God had to make it clear that Aaron was to be the high priest. We read, "They assembled together against Moses and Aaron" (Num 16:3). According to Jewish reckoning, this day corresponds to the same day years later that the Sanhedrin assembled against Messiah Yeshua, the head over all Israel, by arresting Him. We will call this DAY 1. Likewise, Korah's attempt to overthrow Moses and Aaron corresponds to the crucifixion. Korah is just like Caiaphas while Dathan and Abiram are just like the Judean leadership.

As a result of this rebellion we see the following instruction: "Then he [Moses] said to Korah and all his followers: 'In the morning [at morning sacrifice] the LORD will show who belongs to Him and who is holy, . . . Take censers and tomorrow put fire and incense in them before the LORD. The man the LORD chooses will be the one who is holy'" (Num 16:4-7). It is most probable that Moses said this in the late afternoon, otherwise he would have suggested to offer incense at the time of the afternoon sacrifice. Likewise, this is just like Jesus who was put in the tomb after the time of the afternoon sacrifice.

The next morning would begin DAY 2 where we see in Numbers that Korah and his followers are destroyed by God when the earth opens up to swallow them alive. That night, would then correspond to the second night that Jesus was in the tomb. We then see the story continuing the next day when the people are angry that Korah and his followers were killed: "'But on the next day [DAY 3] all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, 'You are the ones who have caused the death of the Lord's people'" (Num 16:41). What was the result? God brought about a plague and Aaron, as an interceding priest, took his censor to intercede on behalf of the people. God told Moses to collect all 12 staffs and put them in the Tabernacle that night (Night 3), which corresponds to the third night Jesus was in the tomb. Sometime after the Sabbath, but before the dawn on Sunday, Jesus rose from the dead, which would be the same night that Aaron's staff had budded. We see this account recorded, "The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds" (Num 17:8-9). It is no coincidence that likewise on this same morning years later that we see Mary going to the tomb of Jesus: "Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb" (Mark 16:2-3).

By itself, the above may seem to be a stretch of the imagination, however, the sages have always understood this event to have messianic significance. Part of the reason is because a staff is simply a dead branch of wood. In Numbers 17 the sign of God's choice for high priest is a type of resurrection where a dead branch becomes alive. The same was true with Christ as was prophesied, "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch (*netzer or rxn*) will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him—" (Isa 11:1-2). Remember that Jesus came from Nazareth which is prophetically foretold in this Isaiah passage. The word for Nazareth is, *Nazaret or trxn* or literally, Branchtown. This is why we read in Matthew that it was foretold of Jesus that, "He shall be called a Nazarene (*natzri*)" (Mat 2:23).

We see a similar prophesy in Isaiah, "In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious" (Isa 4:2). We know that Isaiah is referring to the Messiah here as the "Branch," however, the word here is *tzemach or tmx* meaning a branch that blossoms forth. This hints at a resurrection and also points back to Aaron's staff. Isaiah wasn't the only one painting this picture. Jeremiah also refers to the Messiah as the *Tsemach*: "The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely" (Jer 23:5). Also, "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; He will do what is just and right in the land" (Jer 33:15). Zechariah also calls the coming Messiah the Branch: "Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from His place and build the temple of the LORD'" (Zech 6:12-13). The Jews understood these verses connected with Aaron's staff and the Messiah in some way.

Today there is a Jewish daily prayer blessing called the *Amidah* which praises God for resurrecting the dead. It says, "You are a King who causes death and resurrects and who causes salvation to sprout forth (*tzamach*). Even in this prayer the same word is used that prophetically was speaking of the Messiah in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah. If the prayer says, "salvation sprouts forth" and the Hebrew word for salvation is *Yeshuah*, it could be easily understood as "who resurrects the Messiah."

Also in Judaism, another part of the blessings of the daily prayer is a prayer for the coming of the Messiah in which they pray, "May You cause the Branch (*Tzemach*) of David Your servant to sprout forth (*Tzamach* verb) quickly, whose horn will be raised with Your salvation (*Yeshuah*), for we hope for Your salvation (*Yeshuah*) all day long. Blessed are You, O Lord, Who causes the horn of salvation (*Yeshuah*) to sprout forth (*tzamach*)" (14th blessing of *Amidah*). Isn't it amazing that their daily prayers call on God to send the Messiah and they even ask for Him by name -- Yeshua. How could they miss Him when He came the first time? Simply put, God blinded them to open the door for the Gentiles, however, be assured, God is about to open their eyes and ears of understanding.

Just as God caused Aaron's staff, a dead branch, to sprout forth, so too, Yeshua is the blossoming Branch of David. The passage in Numbers 17:8 didn't use the word *Tsamech* for Aaron's staff, but rather *tzitz* which can also mean to blossom. This also relates to the *tzitzit* or tassels which were like sprouts blossoming from the four corners of the garment that God instructed them to put on to remember the commandments. Keep in mind, the commandments represent the character of God Himself. *Tzitz* is also used for the sacred plate of pure gold worn by the high priest on his forehead as we read, "Make a plate (*tzitz*) of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. Fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban" (Ex 28:36-37).

The Jewish Midrash Rabbah explains why this gold plate was to be worn. The plate had the ineffable name written on it, a sign of God's authority. Interestingly, the Jews record that when Aaron's staff budded, God's name miraculously appeared etched on the wood as well. Combine this with the fact that the Book of Numbers uses *tzitz* in a noun and verb form saying *vayatzetz tzitz* or "blossomed blossoms" we have an interesting parallel to Aaron's staff and the gold plate. The Jewish sages explained why this word choice was used: "The Holy One blessed be He, decreed that the unspeakable name of God that is written on the High priest's plate (*tzitz*) should be written on Aaron's staff, as may be deduced from the passage [Num 17:8]" (Rabbah 18:23).

In other words, the Jewish sages understood that the Messiah was to be like the rod that blossomed, the righteous branch that came back to life. Not only that, but He would be given authority by the Name of God as symbolized by God's Name being etched into the staff. Even the New Testament supports this understanding as we read of Jesus: "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9).

We read the end of the matter in Numbers 17:10: "The LORD said to Moses, 'Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against Me, so that they will not die.'" According to Jewish legend, "the same staff was held in the hand of every king until the Temple was destroyed, and then it was hidden away. That same staff also is destined to be held in the hand of King Messiah, as it says [in Psalms 110:2], The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, 'Rule in the midst of Your enemies.'" (Numbers, Rabbah 18:23). Therefore, the Messianic Jews of today believe when the Lord returns again, He will be bearing Aaron's staff as a testimony against those who rebel.

Moses was the prophet and king. Aaron was the priest. Two separate people bearing different roles. When Yeshua comes again, He will come as King, Prophet and Priest. In Christ the two offices of King and priest are reconciled as God had shown the Israelites with Moses and Aaron being His divine choice. We read how Christ reconciles these offices at His return: "Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and He will branch out from His place and build the temple of the LORD. It is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He will be clothed with majesty and will *sit and rule on His throne*. And He will be *a priest on His throne*. And there will be *harmony between the two*" (Zech 6:12-14).

Next time you read of Aaron's staff budding, you can know that it foreshadowed not only Christ's resurrection, but also His second coming when the kingly and priestly offices will be held in harmony by our Messiah, who very well may be holding Aaron's budded staff showing Him to be God's choice, bearing God's name, silencing all who rebel against Him.

BEING BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD?

In the Old Testament there were a number of cleansing rituals that had to take place if anyone had come into contact with a dead body. Touching anything unclean made you unclean as well. Being unclean wasn't sinful, it just meant that you couldn't go into the Temple or celebrate the festivals God had ordained. In order to be able to come near to God, God had to cleanse you with a *mikvah* or baptism. This foreshadowed the fact that we can not get to heaven unless Jesus first makes us clean as well. We read of a red heifer that was to be slaughtered as part of this ritual cleansing in Numbers: "This is a requirement of the law that the LORD has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke. Give it to Eleazar the priest; it is to be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence" (Num 19:2-3).

As we continue to read through the details of this cleansing ritual in this chapter we see that the priest mixed ashes of this red cow with water. The contaminated person needed to be sprinkled with this ash/water twice throughout a seven day period. He was sprinkled on the third day and the seventh day, and then completed with an immersion into the water (*mikvah*).

This red heifer symbolizes Jesus, the sacrifice that cleanses us as well. Note that the heifer had to be burned outside the Tabernacle/Temple where, according to Jewish history, it was burned on the Mount of Olives, across from the Temple Mount. (m.Parah 3:5-10) The New Testament tell us one reason why this instruction was given by God was to show that Jesus would be sacrificed outside of the Temple and city as well: "The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His own blood. Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore" (Heb 13:11-13). In other words, the death of Jesus, outside the camp, was necessary to cleanse us from the contamination of sin, leading to death. We also read, "The blood of goats and bulls *and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those* who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. *How much more*, then, will the *blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Heb 9:13-14). The blood and the ash were both important in the cleansing process.

Going back to Numbers we see further instructions: “The man who is clean is to sprinkle the unclean person on the third and seventh days, and on the seventh day he is to purify him. The person being cleansed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and that evening he will be clean” (Num 19:19-20). Why the third and seventh days? We know that throughout the Scriptures, the third day is associated with the resurrection and in some cases, Christ’s second coming as we see in Hosea, “After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will restore us, that we may live in His presence” (Hos 6:2). What about the 7th day? 7 represents finality and, in this case, the final redemption! A Shabbat or seventh day rest. This is why all the rich resurrection allusions are celebrated in the 7th month of the year throughout Scripture as well.

Yet there is one more very important lesson seen in these verses from Numbers 19 that helps us understand the new testament so much better. We read in Corinthians where Paul is trying to support the resurrection of the dead. To do so he says, “Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do *who are baptized for the dead*? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them” (1 Cor 15:29)? Are we suppose to baptize for the dead as the Mormons do? Not at all. If one looks at commentaries to find the explanation of these verses in Corinthians we typically see them saying that Paul may have been referring to a pagan custom of that day. This can’t be right. Why would Paul use a pagan custom to support the truth of the resurrection? He wouldn’t do that. The problem is that because we have somehow divorced the Old Testament from the New Testament when we come up with a problem in the New Testament we try to explain it from only a New Testament perspective rather than looking at the Old to reveal what is in the New. Simply by realizing that God did not get rid of the Old Testament we see there is a simple answer to this problem.

Just as it is today, back in Jesus day when someone died, someone would voluntarily become unclean by touching that dead body to prepare it for the resurrection by anointing it with spices etc. In fact, it was an honor to do so. Therefore, to prepare the body for this resurrection, one would have to eventually go through this ritual *mikvah* or baptism to become clean again. Therefore, Paul is simply stating, if there was no resurrection, why are you guys becoming unclean by touching them and having to be baptized for the sake of these dead people? One need only to realize that Paul was referring to the baptism (*mikvah*) of Numbers 19 to be able to explain 1 Corinthians 15 adequately.

THE DEATH OF MIRIAM

We read in Numbers 20:1-2 “In the first month. . . There Miriam died and was buried. Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron.” It is interesting to note that soon after Israel left Egypt they complained to Moses and God (Ex 17:1-7) because they did not have any water. God had instructed Moses to strike a rock so that water came from the rock to give water to the probable two million people. This was nearly 40 years before the death of Miriam as we are reading here. So where was Israel getting water for 40 years in the desert after the rock striking event?

As we look into historical records we see the Jewish sages record, “Thereafter, this water-giving rock miraculously accompanied the Children of Israel throughout their wanderings in the desert” (Mechilta). In other words, the Jews believe this rock that Moses struck almost 40 years earlier followed them throughout the desert. If you are anything like me, this sounded a little fishy, however, upon further research in the New Testament, we find that the sages were right. Paul records, “They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock *that accompanied them*, and that rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:3-5). Clearly the Bible says that rock accompanied them throughout the desert because Christ went with them wherever they went. There is no question that the rock is Christ and the water coming from Him is the living water we read of in John, “‘Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him’ By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive” (John 7:38-39).

Jewish Midrash continues to comment on this Rock: “This miraculous water-giving rock was always present in the wilderness with the children of Israel. When the people camped, it rested in a high place opposite the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. . . Wherever the Jews encamped, grass, trees, vines, figs, and pomegranates sprang up at its edge. The vines produced seven differently flavored grapes. The Children of Israel tasted in the water and plants produced by the Well of Miriam the goodness of the world to come” (Midrash Says Bamidbar). As you can see the sages saw a cause and effect relationship between the death of Miriam and the waters stopping. They even referred to the rock as “The well of Miriam.” Why is this?

From Jewish tradition we know that the first 7 days of the 30 days of mourning are set aside for grieving. After these seven days of grieving after Miriam died, it is possible that Israel may have been desperate for water and they began complaining again. We also know that there are three offices represented in the characters of Exodus. Aaron was the priest, Moses was the king and Miriam was the prophetess. Jesus acted as a prophet (word in flesh form) when He walked the earth. He also served as priest in His death and as king in His resurrection, exaltation and return. Understanding this we can see that the water stopped when the prophet office held by Miriam died. After her death, Moses and Aaron (priestly and kingly ministers) were to go speak to the rock and resurrect the living water. We read of this event in Numbers 20:11: “Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.”

Although our text here only tells us that it was the first of the month, tradition has it that Miriam died on 10th of Nisan. If so, this is quite significant because it is the same day the Passover lamb was selected every year. Therefore there is a parallel in that the living waters ceased to flow when both Miriam and Jesus, our Passover Lamb died.

If Moses and Aaron mourned for the seven days before striking the rock an amazing correlation emerges. That would put it at the 17th of Nisan when the waters began to flow again. This is the exact same day that the Scriptures tell us Jesus rose from the dead. In other Words, the Living Water flowed again.

It is only a few months later that we read of Aaron's death as well. Moses took Aaron to the mountain where he removed his priestly garments and put them on his son Eleazar. This illustrates the important aspect of the Levitical priesthood in that the Aaronic priests were, "prevented by death from continuing" (Heb 7:23). And, "The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless" (Heb 7:18). Under the New Covenant Jesus, "has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to His ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life" (Heb 7:16-17). As Miriam dies, we see the resurrection of Jesus allows the prophet role to continue on. When Aaron dies, we see the priestly role continues to live on through the indestructible life of Jesus as well. When Moses dies, Jesus was able to take the role of King as He sat down at the right hand of God.

THE SNAKE IN THE WILDERNESS

We often read through the Bible events and find them interesting, but fail to dig in deep enough to see what the Lord is trying to show us. One disadvantage of the average person not knowing Hebrew is that they miss some of the flags that have been placed to point out these areas of interest. The Jewish sages not only recognized these flags, but were also very meticulous in recording and passing down the histories of which they themselves lived through. When the Israelites were in the desert they began to complain to God as they normally did. This time, God caused poisonous vipers to bite them. Moses consulted God and he was told to take a bronze snake, place it on a pole and anyone who was bitten could then gaze upon this bronze snake and be healed. Though we read of the snake in the desert as a strange way to be healed, there is much more behind the story than one realizes.

In Numbers 21:8-9 we read, "The LORD said to Moses, 'Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.' So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived." For those who don't know Hebrew or the Jewish records of this account, there is no excuse not to realize that this snake represented Jesus and the cross because Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life (John 3:14-15). Though we can understand the symbolism it still seems strange to have a snake being used and how was it lifted up? To answer that question we first must ask what "lifted up" means?

To answer what "lifted up" means we only need to go to the New Testament again for the Old Testament to be revealed. We read in John 12:32-33 where Jesus said, "'But I, when I am *lifted up* from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself.' He said this to show the kind of death He was going to die." The explanation given by Jesus Himself is that it meant to be crucified and killed. Connecting this to the serpent, we have been bitten by the serpent Satan and we need to gaze upon the death and lifting up of our Messiah for our healing. We also see that it is actually Satan who will be put "killed" in Christ's death. The Jewish sages even recorded of this event that it was faith in God and obedience to His command that resulted in the miraculous healing, not any magical property of the bronze serpent.

However, being “lifted up” has a dual meaning as we see it also points to the ascension of Jesus. When the Scriptures said, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole” (Num 21:8) the word for pole is *nes*. This is the same word for “miracle” and thus, one might say, “put it up on a miracle.” The sages strangely translated it as so saying, “And Moses made a bronze serpent and put it on the miracle. That means he cast it into the air and it stayed there” (Numbers Rabbah 19:23). Yes, that’s right, the Jews record that this event wasn’t only a miracle of healing, but that the actual serpent pole miraculously was suspended in the air. When we read in John 3 Jesus explained to Nicodemus that he must be “lifted up.” Looking at the full context, however, we see that Jesus had just finished telling him that “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man” (v. 13). It is no coincidence that in verse 14 Jesus then quotes the Numbers verse about the serpent. Clearly there is a connection here.

In John 6:61-62 Jesus told the Galileans that He had “descended from heaven.” When they had trouble with this He said, “What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?” In other words, what Jesus was saying is that when He ascended, He rose from the ground on the strength of a miracle. He was lifted up on a *nes* (miracle) and that miracle was the power of God, “And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you” (Rom 8:11).

In typical human fashion, years later the Israelites took this sign of salvation and turned it into an idol as we read in 2 Kings 18:4: “He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called *Nehushtan*).” (*Nehushtan* is *nechoshet* “bronze” and *nachash* “serpent” combined). In some ways we see the same as happened to us today. Many Christians have taken the sign of the miracle of salvation and have begun to worship it, rather than the author of that salvation. Remember, the sages said it wasn’t the bronze snake itself that healed, but rather the faith in God and obedience to His command. Likewise, it isn’t the cross that saves you, it is our faith and obedience to Him that saves us. The cross is a mere reminder of the miracle, yet today many have venerated the crucifix and have turned it into an idol. There is nothing wrong with the cross unless it becomes an object of adoration and worship which, unfortunately, it seems that it has in many churches.

What a beautiful picture of Christ and the miraculous resurrection power that is seen in the bronze serpent. It was Satan, that ancient serpent, who was lifted up in death when Christ was lifted up in His resurrection. When the Israelites in the desert looked up at the snake that had bitten them, the pole which was lifted up on a miracle took all the power away from those snakes. Likewise, Satan has bitten us and when we look to Jesus who was lifted up on a miracle, Satan has no power over us as well. We are now healed through Jesus. Praise be to God!

BALAAM’S CURSE

When the Israelites were camped in the wilderness, the Moabites were fearful that they would be destroyed as they saw the large number of Israelites. As a result, Numbers 23 and 24 record how Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel. Most of us know the story how Balaam was rebuked by a donkey, but that isn't the main point of this story. As we look at it more carefully we see that Balaam was not allowed to curse Israel because God had forbidden him to do so. Instead, Balaam only blessed Israel. This of course infuriated Balak who sent Balaam home without any payment. At first glance this seems to be the end of the story, however, in the next chapter (Numbers 25) we see that the Moabites send their beautiful women to seduce the Israelites which leads to a plague at Peor. The plague is stopped when a man named Phinehas drives a spear through an Israelite and his Moabite girlfriend. We aren't told why these women began coming into the Israelite camp, however, in chapter 31 of Numbers we see the Israelites go to battle against the Moabites and Balaam is killed as well. The Scriptures then tell us, "They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the Lord in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the Lord's people" (Num 31:8,16). Apparently, Balaam had told Balak that since he couldn't curse the Israelites, he would have to get them to curse themselves by disobeying God's commands. All they had to do was to send their women to tempt the men into sin and Balak would get what he wanted. Balak followed this advice and God later judged Balaam for this.

However, there is still much more to the story than what we have just outlined here. The Jewish Targums and Midrash say Balaam's Prophecy of blessing actually pointed to the Messiah. We read a portion of this blessing in **Numbers 23:10: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"** Here Balaam used two terms, the first is plural (righteous ones) and the second is singular (his). Who is this singular righteous one. The sages saw it as the Messiah.

Likewise, part of the blessing showed that the curse of death could not overcome the people of God: **"The LORD their God is with them; the shout of the King is among them"** (Num 23:21). The word "shout" is *teruah* which is the same word for a shofar blast. Therefore, it could be translated, **"the trumpet blast of the king is among them."** We have discussed in earlier sections the importance of this trumpet blast at the Lord's coming. The New Testament as well as the Old, is filled with verses referencing this *teruah*. **"For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call (*teruah*) of God" (1 Thess 4:16).**

To show that the Messiah was the common understanding of this prophecy we see the Targum Yonaton translates Numbers 23:21 to say, **"The Word of the Lord their God is their help,, and the trumpets of the King Messiah resound among them."** Note it doesn't say it will resound but is resounding. Why the present tense? Remember, each time they blew the shofar on the Feast of Trumpets, it was a rehearsal of the day of His coming. The Jews would blow the *teruah* every year in anticipation of the Messiah's coming.

In Numbers 23:24 we see further Messianic foreshadowing: "The people rise like a lioness; they rouse themselves like a lion." The lion is a clear reference to the Messiah throughout the Bible. We see in Genesis 49:9 "You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son." This, too, was prophetic of Jesus.

Balaam's prophecy in **Numbers 24:7** states, **"He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted."** There are two significant features here. **First the pouring out of water from HIS buckets. We know that Jesus refers to Himself as the living waters,** "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him'" (John 7:37-39). There is no doubt that Christ has poured Himself out so that His seed had become many waters.

Secondly, we see that He will become higher than Agag. If you recall from the book of Esther, **Haman was an Agagite and Agag was the king of the Amalekites. Agagites and Amalekites are understood as anti-Semites in Hebrew terminology. Therefore, Balaam's prophecy implies that the Messiah would rise above anti-semitism throughout time. (See Ex 17:16).** Any student of history can show you that this is exactly what has happened and the covenant God has made with the Jew continues to stand to this day. Those who bless Israel are blessed and those who curse them have become cursed.

Numbers 24:17-18 gives more of Balaam's blessing: **"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly."** Here we see that a Star would come out of Jacob who would rule and destroy Moab and the enemies of Israel. The Targum Yonaton say this speaks of King Messiah making war against the enemies of Israel in the final battle of Gog and Magog as spoke of in Ezekiel. How is it that the Jews alive before the days of Christ saw these Messianic promises, yet they still missed the Messiah at His first coming? Verse 17 said, **"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob."** Matthew opens his Gospel telling us, **"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east"** (Matt 2:2). **The Jews knew this was prophetic of the Messiah, yet when the Star appears they denied Him.**

In Daniel 11:30 we see another interesting tidbit as we read, "For the ships of Kittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved." Daniel, the interpreter of dreams and visions, refers to Rome here as Kittim. This is important because Kittim is also referred to in Balaam's prophecy: "Ah, who can live when God does this? Ships will come from the shores of Kittim; they will subdue Asshur and Eber, but they too will come to ruin" (Num 24:23-24). In other words, what we see here is that Balaam saw the eventual rise of Rome (Kittim) and the affliction of the Jewish people (Eber) under Roman tyranny at the end of days, "but they too will come to ruin." Roman rule and Jewish subjection was a prerequisite to the Messiah's coming. One such proof text states, "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his" (Gen 49:10). The Jews always understood that when their power was gone, the door was opened for the Messiah. This is exactly what happened. In fact, since it wasn't immediate, there were many Jews during the days of Jesus that were mourning because they thought they had missed the Messiah. They were well aware of the timing of the Messiah's coming, yet they still missed Him - - the first time.

AVENGER OF BLOOD

When the Israelites have begun to settle in their community, God knew that He needed to establish rules of order. One of those rules stated that if a person had accidentally killed someone, he could flee to a city of refuge so that no one could avenge the blood of the victim. We read in Numbers 35:12-13 of these special cities: “They will be places of refuge from the avenger, so that a person accused of murder may not die before he stands trial before the assembly.” If the courts found you innocent and the death was an accident you were safe as long as you stayed in the city. However, if you left the protection of that city, the blood avenger could take your life (Num 35:26-28).

Messiah is our city of refuge while our adversary, the devil, pursues us like a blood avenger. As long as we remain in Messiah, we need not fear the enemy.

- On the other hand, if the accused was found guilty we read, “The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death” (Num 35:19-20). We are the victim and those who kill the saints need to fear the avenger of blood. The Jews have always understood that the Messiah would not only redeem them, but also avenge them as well. Messiah must avenge them just as a kinsman redeemer would do. Consider the following verses showing the Messiah to be our avenger of blood:

- “He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. He will drink from a brook beside the way; therefore He will lift up His head” (Ps 110:6-7).
- “They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until You judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood’”(Rev 6:9-11)?
- “It is Mine to avenge; I will repay” (Deut 32:35).
- “Say to those with fearful hearts, ‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, He will come with vengeance; with divine retribution He will come to save you’” (Isa 35:4).

Anyone staying in the city of refuge had to remain there until there was a death of the high priest. Leaving before this time would put your own life in danger. We read, “The accused must stay in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; only after the death of the high priest may he return to his own property” (Num 35:28). In other words, the death of the High Priest cancels the blood redeemer’s right to exact vengeance. As believers today, the death of our High Priest, Jesus, erases our debts of guilt and sin as well.

Just a side note here dealing with inheritance rights and women. According to the Bible, “If a man dies and leaves no son, turn his inheritance over to his daughter” (Num 27:8-9). Also, “Speaking of woman who marry: ‘They may marry anyone they please as long as they marry within the tribal clan of their father. No inheritance in Israel is to pass from tribe to tribe, for every Israelite shall keep the tribal land inherited from his forefathers’” (Num 36:2-3,6-8). The rule was that if a woman married she assumed the tribal identity of her husband. A woman’s tribal identity was determined by her husband. This is why the Gospels don’t give us a genealogy for Miriam, but instead traces the line of Joseph. Her marriage to Joseph made her pedigree irrelevant. This explains how Gentile believers come to have honorary status within the people of Israel as well. When we become believers, Messiah, our husband, makes our pedigree irrelevant as well.

FAST DAYS AND THE LORD’S RETURN

When the Israelites had an opportunity to go into the promised land, they lacked faith in God’s deliverance against the giants that lived in the land. We read, “But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God” (Deut 1:26). Jewish tradition says this event happened on the 9th of Av (Tisha B’Av). This day is very important because it is the exact day of the destruction of the Temple in 586 BC and also on the same day again in 70 AD. It would be 40 years before God would lead the Israelites into the promised land and many more beyond that before the Temple would be built.

God had promised to bring Israel into the promised land and to be their God, however, when all of this happened, it was to be a sign of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Since the Temple had been rebuilt and the Jews were in their land again, they asked Zechariah, “Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years” (Zech 7:3)? Zechariah responded by making it clear that the day of final redemption hadn’t come yet. This wasn’t the new Jerusalem yet as they were thinking. We read Zechariah’s words, “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace’” (Zech 8:18-19).

These four fasts mentioned by Zechariah are all still observed today. The fast of the fourth month is the 17th of Tammuz. This is the day the Temple service ceased during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem so it was a very somber remembrance. The fast of the fifth month is the 9th of Av. Again, this is to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon and also later by Rome, as well as anniversary of Israel rejecting the promised land. The fast of the seventh month is to remember when Gedaliah was killed, ending the Davidic rulership. Finally, the fast of the tenth month marks the day the Babylonian siege began. All of these events were terrible days in Jewish history and these fast days are somber remembrances. Yet, Zechariah told us that these days would become occasions for joy. In other words, Zechariah was saying that when the Messiah comes, Jerusalem will be rebuilt as an eternal place, never to be overthrown again. At that time the four fasts will turn into days of gladness and feasting. Then, “The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they?” (Mat 9:15). As long as these fast days are somber, we can be sure the kingdom of God is only at hand, not fulfilled in its entirety. For this reason we pray, “Come Lord Jesus, Come!”

THE RAPTURE

There are a lot of different ideas out there as far as what the rapture is going to be. I have grown up learning about pre-trib, post-trib, mid-trib to no-trib raptures. It seems that these are the only choices given, however, the Jews have had a unique understanding of the rapture that is often ignored. Typically, regardless of the timing, people view the rapture the time when the Lord returns and all of a sudden, His children are caught up to be with Him in heaven. Although I am not saying the Jewish understanding of this will be the correct one, I think it is worth looking at to include in the list of possibilities.

The word “rapture” is not in the Bible. It comes from the Latin verb *rapiemu* meaning “carried off” or “caught up.” It was used in the 5th century Latin Vulgate translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 where we read, “Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together.” The prior verses tell us, “For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words” (1 Thess 4:16-18). Corinthians records this event in these words: “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ ‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting’” (1 Cor 15:51-55 Quoting Hosea 13:14). Therefore, from these verses we can see that the rapture is to bring about the following:

- We are caught up together.
- Lord comes down from heaven with a loud command.
- Dead in Christ rise, then we meet them and the Lord in the clouds.
- We are with the Lord forever.
- It will take place in a flash.
- It will take place at the last trumpet.
- We will be immortal at this time.
- Death will be destroyed.

Another verse worth looking at that is often used for the rapture but also misunderstood is found in Luke: "I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. 'Where, Lord?' they asked. He replied, 'Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather'" (Luke 17:34-34). This is misunderstood because it is not referring to the rapture. Look carefully, the one "taken" is taken for judgment, not for any of the reasons listed above. When the disciples asked where these people were taken, the answer was where the vultures would eat them. In this case then, it would be better to be left behind. Revelation refers to this event: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, 'Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great'" (Rev 19:17-18). Clearly Luke is referring to the day of judgment, though it may be connected with the rapture, it is not the rapture itself.

The other problem with our traditional view of the rapture is that whatever we believe about the New Testament, must align with the Old Testament. Remember, the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. So we must ask, are there any Old Testament references to the rapture? Many people use example such as Enoch walking with God and then being no more. how the Lord saved Noah and his family from the flood, or how Lot was taken out of the city before judgment. Although these are examples of God's deliverance, none of them directly fit the rapture as described in the New Testament. In fact, there are no Old Testament verses that really fit the description of the rapture held by most Christians today. This should be troubling to say the least.

So what do we see in the Old Testament? Moses said that if Israel didn't keep the covenant God would, "scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other" (Deut 28:64). However, in Deuteronomy 30:2-5 He says, "When you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and *gather you again* from all the nations where He scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God *will gather you* and bring you back." Even to this day, the Jews remain scattered around the globe yet God has promised to bring them back to their land. Although many have returned to Jerusalem today, the prophecy has not even come close to being fulfilled. Moses and the prophets promise that one day God will collect His chosen people, His elect, from the four corners of the earth and bring them back to their homeland. In Hebrew this is called *kibbutz galuyot*.

In Judaism they are to pray three times a day this prayer: "Blast the Great Shofar for our freedom, and lift a banner to gather our exiles, and gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You, O Lord, who gathers the scattered ones of His people Israel." (Tenth Benediction of the Shemoneh Esrei). This prayer is very Biblical and the meat of which, is found in many verses. Consider the following points:

- Isa 11:12 "He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth."

- Jer 23:3 "I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture"

- Ezek 11:17 "I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again."

- Isaiah even connects the return to the land of Israel with the *sound of a shofar trumpet*. Isaiah 27:12-13 says, "O Israelites, will be gathered up one by one. And in that day *a great trumpet will sound*. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem."

- Ezekiel 37:21-25 ties the coming of the Messiah (2nd coming) together with the ingathering as well: "I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will *gather them from all around* and bring them back into their own land. . . They will be My people, and I will be their God. '*My servant David will be king over them*, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow My laws and be careful to keep My decrees. They will live in the land I gave to My servant Jacob'" (v. 12 links this to the resurrection of the dead).

- In Jewish eschatology the ingathering is linked with the coming of Messiah and final redemption. The Messiah will gather scattered Israel from the 4 corners of the earth as even Jesus said in Matthew 24:30-31 "And He will send His angels with a *loud trumpet call*, and they *will gather His elect from the four winds*, from one end of the heavens to the other."

The New Testament also connects these events with the clouds as well. In Revelation 14:14-20 we read, "I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one 'like a son of man' with a crown of gold on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to Him who was sitting on the cloud, 'Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.' So He who was seated on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, 'Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe.' The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath." Note that in these verses we see Jesus sitting among the clouds. He takes His sickle and harvests the righteous people to be with Him. Then another angel harvests the ungodly and puts them in a place for wrath, perhaps the valley of armageddon.

In summary then, what the Jews see is that the rapture is the time when God will gather the 12 tribes of Israel back into their land. This isn't the natural moving of the Jews to Jerusalem like we see today, but a supernatural gathering of the elect. Likewise, the Jerusalem is not the city we see today, but it is a restored city wherein King David reigns and God is present. It isn't a slow gathering as we see today either, it is an event marked by the sound of a loud trumpet call as Isaiah, Matthew, Corinthians and Thessalonians all tell us. With this understanding of the rapture, both Old and New come together in perfect harmony.

So where does that leave the Gentiles? Isaiah tell us, “The Sovereign LORD declares-- He who gathers the exiles of Israel: ‘I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered’” (Isa 56:8). The Gentiles have been grafted into the same covenant and, therefore, just as we see in the Old Testament, they are considered God’s chosen ones as well. “The Lord will have compassion on Jacob; once again He will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land. *Aliens will join them* and unite with the house of Jacob” (Isa 14:1). Also, “The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born” (Lev 19:34), and “You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves *and for the aliens who have settled among you* and who have children. You are to *consider them as native-born Israelites*; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel” (Ezek 47:21-22). This is why in the New Jerusalem described in Revelation the names of the twelve tribes are written on the gates and you must enter through your tribal gate. Which gate does the Gentile go through? Whichever one God has assigned you to be a part of.

It seems that it is possible that the prophets are saying the destination of the raptured ones isn’t heaven, but the city of Jerusalem before the new heaven is created in the last chapters of Revelation. It is simply the Lord, sitting on the clouds, harvesting the earth to take them to be with Him in a type of restored Jerusalem during the millennial reign. It will be at this time that there will be a change in our flesh as well as the following verses allude to:

- Deut 30:5-7 “He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.”

- Jer 4:4 “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem”

- Rom 2:25-29 “If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? . . . A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.”

- Ezek 36:24-29 “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be My people, and I will be your God.”

Again, I’m not saying that this is necessarily the rapture, merely that it belongs as a possibility among the others. This idea seems to just flow better with the understanding of the Old Testament and the many verses that discuss the gathering of God’s people. Regardless of the interpretation, we can be sure that it is a time when we will be with the Lord forever, in a renewed state of mind and body. I for one, look forward to this day!

TIME SPENT IN THE MESSIANIC AGE

The Jewish sages are fairly insistent on the idea that in the Messianic age we are going to spend a lot of time studying the Torah or the Word of God. Therefore, studying the Bible today is a foretaste of the Messianic Age that is often forfeited by many Christians today. One of the first things it is believed the Messiah will do is to correct our errors. We have already saw in our discussion of the Feast of Tabernacles how this is going to be fulfilled on the 8th day celebration of that feast. However, there are other reasons to believe this will happen as well.

In Deuteronomy 31:10-12 we read “Then Moses commanded them: ‘At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place He will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing.’” The Torah was to be read once every seven years (Sabbatical year) during the Feast of Sukkot or Tabernacles. WHY?

The sages viewed this entire week as a broad outline for human history. After all, the Psalmist wrote, “For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by” (Ps 90:4). This truth is echoed in 2 Peter 3:8-9 which states, “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” Remember that Tabernacles or Sukkot is the 7th of the annual festivals where there is a 7 day feast in the 7th month. It was a time when all nations would ascend to Jerusalem and bare tribute to King Messiah. It was a foretaste of what Zechariah spoke of saying, “Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zech 14:16-17).

It is interesting to note that Deuteronomy 31:11 is the only commandment in the entire Old Testament mandating the public reading of the Scripture. Ezra is credited with establishing the local synagogue system through which the people could hear the Torah read every Sabbath, but prior to that time, it seems that God had only commanded it here in Deuteronomy. In the New Testament, however, we see Timothy says, “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching” (1 Tim 4:13-14). The word for public reading here is *anignosos*, a word specific for public reading of the Torah in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Therefore, this weekly reading echos the command of Moses on the yearly Sabbath.

However, as we look closely at the command to read the Torah in Deuteronomy 31:11 there is an fascinating question that arises. It states, “You shall read this Torah. . .” Who is “you”? It is a singular form but does not address who the person is that is to do the reading. God certainly wasn’t addressing the masses here since it is the singular “you.” It is this Hebrew clue that caused the sages to teach that it was the one who had authority to assemble the entire nation. Only the king of Israel had that authority, however, at this time there is no king. It seems that only Moses could fit this bill in the natural, however, in the supernatural it is very likely that this is a prophetic picture of when King Messiah reigns in Jerusalem and proclaims the Torah of God.

The Midrash Rabbah on this text says, “When he, about whom it is written [in Zech 9:9], “humble and riding on a donkey” will come, he will elucidate for them the words of the Torah, and elucidate for them their errors. (Genesis Rabbah 98:9). In other words, the sages are saying that He will correct our errors or misunderstandings of the Word. In some ways that is exactly what Jesus did in His first coming, helping to identify Himself as the Messiah. This is why we see Jesus saying things like, “you have heard it said. . . but I tell you.”

There can be no question that Jesus gave us a foretaste of the clarity that He will bring at His second coming. Isaiah prophesied, “Many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa 2:3). Though fulfilled only in part, we wait patiently for the Sabbatical rest at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles when the Messiah will read His Word publicly and give us understanding of it all.

MOSES PROPHETICALLY BLESSES ISRAEL AND IDENTIFIES MESSIAH

Deut 33:1-2 “This is the blessing that Moses the man of God pronounced on the Israelites before his death.” When Moses blesses the Israelite people, this was a type of patriarchal blessing with prophetic meaning that was given to each tribe, much like Isaac and Jacob did before they died for their sons. Likewise, Jesus prayed for His disciples the night before He died (John 17) prophetically blessing them.

There is an interesting Word used for God in this blessing: “This is the blessing that Moses the man of God (*ish haElohim*) pronounced on the Israelites before his death.” This word is used to denote a prophet but this is first instance of its use in the Scriptures. Because of this, the sages gave a deliberate misreading stating, “man, God” rather than “man of God.” The Midrash reads, “Rabbi Tanchuma said, ‘If Moses is referred to as God, why is he called ‘man’, and if he is called a ‘man’, why is he also called ‘God’? The reason is this. When he was cast into the river of Egypt he was merely a man, but when the river turned to blood, he was like God.’ Another explanation: when he fled from Pharaoh he was a man, but when he drowned Pharaoh in the sea he was like God. Another explanation: When he went up to heaven [on top of Mount Sinai] he was a man. . . When he came down from heaven he was like God. How so? As it says, and they were afraid to come near him. . .”

This understanding should not surprise as the Bible clearly shows that Moses did typify or foreshadow Christ. The sages saw it as the deity of God represented in human form, not an exact representation as Jesus was, but a Christ-figure. Jesus was the fullness of God in human form.

Let’s look at this blessing Moses gives to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 33:5. Moses says, “He was king over Jeshurun when the leaders of the people assembled, along with the tribes of Israel.” Jeshurun means “upright one” yet who is this upright king Moses is speaking of in this blessing? Either God or Moses! Since Moses is the subject of the previous verse where Moses “charged us with a law” the sages say the king was Moses. This is also important because the sages say that Moses was regarded as a king. Thus Moses serves as a Prophet, Priest and King. All three roles that Jesus played, Moses fits as well.

The Jerusalem Targum interprets the King of Deuteronomy 33:5 as the Messiah King that will gather the tribes together. Lets examine just two verses later where we read in this blessing, “And this he said about Judah: ‘Hear, O LORD, the cry of Judah; *bring him to his people*. With his own hands he defends his cause. Oh, be his help against his foes’” (Deut 33:7)! Here, Moses speaks of the entire tribe of Judah with a singular masculine pronoun “him.” In other words, “bring Judah to his people,” therefore, from a Messianic perspective, since Jesus is from the line of Judah Moses is asking God to bring Messiah to His people. That is exactly the prophecy that is fulfilled in Christ.

The blessing continues: “About Levi he said: ‘Your Thummim and Urim belong to the man you favored. You tested him at Massah; you contended with him at the waters of Meribah’” (Deut 33:8). To understand this lets move forward a bit where we see that Nehemiah talks about the return from the exile. At that time there were many who were excluded from the temple because they didn’t know their ancestry. We read, “These searched for their family records, but they could not find them and so were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. The governor, therefore, ordered them not to eat any of the most sacred food until there should be a priest ministering with the Urim and Thummim” (Neh 7:64-65). Some believe that this situation could be compared to the many dispersed children of Israel today (10 lost tribes) who have lost their ancestral identity. They believe that God will reveal this in the last days so that each tribe will be reunited and joined together. This may be true because the prophets promised that all thirteen tribes will be present and accounted for in the Messianic era (Ezek 37). One of the most famous Jewish rabbis, Maimonides, explains that when Messiah comes He will identify each man’s descent: “In the days of King Messiah, when his kingdom is established and all Israel are gathered into it, the descent of all of them will be confirmed by Him through the Holy Spirit. . . And He will first purify the Children of Levi and will say: ‘This one is of priestly descent, and this one is of Levitic descent.’ And He will reject those [for priesthood] who are not descended of Israel, as it is written, ‘And the [Governor] said to them that they should not eat the most holy things till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummin’” (Ezra 2:63). In the blessing of Moses we see the Thummin and Urim belong to Levi and Maimonides stated that the reason was because the Spirit will determine their ancestry at His return. In other words, Messiah will be like the godly man wielding the Urim and Thummim, identifying each man’s tribe and assigning others (Gentiles) to those tribes. Thus each man can enter his tribal gate as described in Revelation.

Moses continues in verse 12, “About Benjamin he said: ‘Let the beloved of the LORD rest secure in him, for He shields him all day long, and the one the LORD loves rests between his shoulders’” (Deut 33:12). The Jewish Talmud interprets this as an allusion to the temple. They say that “the one the Lord loves” is the temple and the phrase “rests between his shoulders” refers to the hills around Jerusalem. Although this may seem strange at first, “The beloved of the Lord” does seem to be best understood as Jesus. After all, God said of Jesus, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased.” (2 Pet 1:17) Jesus even claimed to be the Temple, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days’” (Mat 26:61). Not only this, but we too, being united with Christ become a part of that Temple as well, “And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (Eph 2:22, 1 Pet 2:5).

Having looked at the above interpretation, let’s look at this text again, “About Benjamin he said: ‘Let the beloved of the LORD rest secure in him, for He shields him all day long, and the one the LORD loves rests between his shoulders’” (Deut 33:12). It is possible, therefore, to see Messianic significance in this text by applying this meaning so as to read, “May Jesus rest secure in him, for God shields Jesus all day in Jerusalem in the Temple between the hills that surround the city.”

Verse 17 continues to reveal Christ as we read, “In majesty he is like a firstborn bull; his horns are the horns of a wild ox. With them he will gore the nations, even those at the ends of the earth” (Deut 33:17). It is no accident that Samuel refers to the horns of the Messiah, “those who oppose the LORD will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven; the LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed” (1 Sam 2:10). We also read of the Messiah in Psalms, “You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox” (Ps 92:10). Even in the Jewish daily prayers they pray, “May You cause the Branch of David Your servant to sprout forth quickly, whose horn will be raised with Your salvation (*Yeshua*), for we hope for Your salvation (*yeshua*) all day long. Blessed are You, O Lord, Who cause the horn of salvation (*yeshua*) to sprout forth” (14th blessing of the Amidah). Should we be surprised that Israel, God’s chosen people, reveal Christ in their very existence? If only, they themselves would recognize Yeshua, the Lord’s salvation.

SIMILARITIES WITH MOSES AND MESSIAH

After Moses blesses the tribes of Israel his current role is finished and it was his turn to depart without entering the promised land. We read, “Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land—” (Deut 34:1). Most who read these verses find themselves sympathetic to Moses since he begged to go into the promised land but was denied access because of one act of disobedience. However, it is wonderful to realize that through Jesus, Moses did get to enter the promised land. We read of the Transfiguration in Matthew 17 where Moses and Elijah appear before Jesus on the mountain within the land. So why did God keep Moses from entering the land before this? There is good reason to believe that part of it was the role Moses played in giving the Law.

Deuteronomy 34:9 states, "Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses." There is no question that Moses represented the LAW but Joshua represented the Spirit and JESUS. In other words, Moses (law) was able to bring the children of Israel only to the edge of the Promised Land, but not into it. It is Joshua (literally *Yeshua*) who brings us into the promised land. Galatians 3:24 says, "The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith."

Another significant point is that Jesus was the greater prophet, the greater king, the greater priest than Moses. Jesus did greater miracles than Moses! The Midrash Rabbah said that the miracles of Moses would be far surpassed by the miracles of the Messianic age. It even lists ten amazing signs and wonders that the Messiah would do in the future and all of them agree with the New Testament. This goes to show that the New Testament is accurate and does not contradict the Old Testament. The Jewish people today would do well to listen to it. The Midrash speaks of the miracles that will take place in the Messianic Age:

1) He will cause a light to shine on the whole world for it says in Isaiah 60:19, "The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory." Though the Jews saw this in the Old Testament, the same thing is seen in the New Testament in Revelation 22:5.

2) Living water will flow from Jerusalem to heal the sick. Ezek 47:9-10 says "so where the river flows everything will live." Revelation 22:1-3 also says "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city."

3) Trees will bear fruit monthly for healing as Ezekiel 47:12 says, "Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. . . Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing." Revelation 22:2 agrees: "On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

4) Ruined cities will be rebuilt, even Sodom and Gomorrah for Ezekiel 16:55 states, "And your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to what they were before" Revelation 21:5 also says, "He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'"

5) Jerusalem will be rebuilt with sapphire as Isaiah 54:11 tells us, "O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires." Revelation 21:15-19 states the same: "The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. . . The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone."

6) The lion and lamb will graze together (Is 11:7).

7) God will make a covenant with the animals as we read in Hosea 2:18: “In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground.” Romans 8:21 tell us as well that, “The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

8) There will be no more weeping, “I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more” (Is 65:19). Revelation 21:3-4 also says, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

9) There will be no more death since Isaiah 25:8 shows us, “He will swallow up death forever,” and Revelation 21:4 says, “There will no longer be any death.” (Also 1 Cor 15:54-55).

10) There will no longer any sighing, crying, or sorrow, but everyone will be rejoicing: Isaiah 35:10 says, “The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.” Rev 21:4 also tells us there will be no more weeping, mourning or pain.

MOSES/JESUS MEN OF ISAIAH 53

In this section we are going to examine how Moses and Jesus have many Messianic parallels in their lives. It was generally understood that Moses typified the coming Messiah and the New Testament proves this was true. Just as Moses was a man of consistent prayer and cried out to the Lord we see the author of Hebrews tell us, “During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission” (Hebrews 5:7-8). Likewise, just before the Israelites are about to enter the promised land and God is leading them across the Jordan River Moses is told again that he would not be entering with the rest of the Israelites. As a result the Scriptures record, “At that time I pleaded with the LORD” (Deut 3:23). The question is, why was Moses so upset. Plain logic would tell us that Moses wanted the comforts of the land just like Israel did, just like you or I would. However, there may be more to this when we think spiritually, rather than in the flesh.

The Talmud discusses Moses' desire to enter the promised land: “Rabbi Simlai taught, Why did Moses our teacher long to enter the land of Israel? Was it because he wanted to eat of its fruits or satiate himself with its produce? No. This is what Moses said, ‘there are many commandments given to Israel which can only be fulfilled in the land. I want to enter the land so that they might all be fulfilled through me’” (b. Sotah 14a). Note: We do not accept the Talmud as the Word of God. It does, however, have interesting insights into the Word of God at times.

The Talmudic interpretation as to the motives of Moses' crying out is an interesting one to say the least. With this interpretation it seemed that Moses shared even Messianic motives. Moses could not fulfill his duty without going into the land because there were certain commandments that could only be kept in the land of Israel, like bringing in the first fruits of the harvest or keeping a Sabbatical year for the ground. Therefore, Jesus could have come to no other place on earth but the promised land to fulfill His role. Jesus said, "Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill them" (Mat 5:17). Note He said fulfill, not cancel. The sages say that fulfilling means observing and thus Jesus would have to observe even those laws that would have to be fulfilled within the land.

One of the reasons the Israelites were to follow God's commands was so that the nations around them would see God and His wisdom. Moses said, "I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, *so that you may follow them in the land* you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, *for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations*, who will hear about all these decrees and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' . . . And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today" (Deut 4:5-8)? This same truth is stated by Jesus, "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16). We are to let our light shine so that those around us may see God clearly.

The Talmud continues with an imagined conversation between God and Moses in which God replies to Moses with the words of Isaiah 53:12. In b. Sotah 14a, God asks Moses, "Why do you desire to enter the land and fulfill the commandments? Is it so that you might receive the reward for keeping the commandments. I will account it as if you performed them all." The Talmud then goes on to use a proof text to identify Moses as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. We know that Isaiah 53 speaks of Jesus, NOT MOSES!, however since Moses so perfectly prefigures Christ, the imagery works both ways if you go and read this chapter. The Talmud continues with what is considered to be God's word to Moses, "I will account it as if you performed [the whole Torah], as it is written [in Isaiah 53:12], 'I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong, because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors.' . . . Because Moses surrendered himself to die, as he said in [Exodus 32:32] 'Forgive Israel's sin, and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!' And Moses, 'was numbered with the transgressors' because he was numbered with the generation who were condemned to die in the wilderness. 'Yet he himself bore the sin of many' because he made atonement for Israel when they made the golden calf. And Moses 'interceded for the transgressor,' because he begged for mercy on behalf of the sinners in Israel that they should turn and repent" (b Sotah 14a). One can't deny the amazing similarities. We even see that God's answer to Moses request to enter the promised land is stated in Deuteronomy 3:26 where we read, "But because of you the LORD was angry with me and would not listen to me." In other words, Moses himself says that God's wrath was upon him because of the Israelites.

Thus, the Jews say Moses offered to lay down his life and be “blotted out of the book” voluntarily so that Israel might live. Moses was “numbered with the transgressors” and took on their punishment even though he had not committed their sins. Moses made atonement on Israel’s behalf and interceded for them after the golden calf incident. He interposed himself between God and Israel so that they may have time to repent. These amazing parallels do indeed suggest that the motives of Moses crying out to God to enter the land was not for himself, but an urgent desire to continue his role for the sake of Israel. The context of Moses’ life and the Scriptures do seem to support this Jewish understanding that Moses wanted to enter the promised land to obey the commands for Israel. Thanks be to God that we don’t need Moses to do this because Jesus did it instead, but in a better way.

ADDING AND SUBTRACTING

The book of Deuteronomy is filled with New Testament parallels that are often missed because of the false idea that the Old Covenant has all been wiped away. Once more, however, we see that the Books of Moses are not separate from the New Testament and the Gospel, they are simply the New Testament concealed. Moses told the Israelites, “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you” (Deut 4:2). This is a very similar command that we see Jesus giving when He said, “Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:19). To break or change even the least of the commands had dire consequences. Not adding to God’s Word includes the non-Biblical traditions that the Pharisees had added to the Law. Some say Jesus added a new commandment in John 13:34 when He said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34-35). However, when we look at this closely we see there was nothing new here at all that was added to the previous command. As a matter of fact, the same command is in Leviticus 19:18 where we read, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus was simply raising the standard to loving as Jesus Himself loved, not as we do. His love for us surpasses our own love for ourselves.

We see similar instances of this type of “new command” many times in the beatitudes when Jesus declared, “You have heard it said, but I tell you. . .” These are not antithesis statements. In each case Jesus brings clarification to the law of Torah, not dispelling it. He demonstrates its full scope and, therefore, as Moses, He does not add or take away from the law.

Another example of the New Testament revealing the truth of the Old is seen just two verses later than the previous section in Deuteronomy. We read “But all of you who held fast (*davak*) to the LORD your God *are still alive today*” (Deut 4:4). The word *davak* means to “cling or cleave.” This word was first used in Genesis 2:24 where a man shall cleave to his wife and become one flesh. The Old Covenant Law was telling us that those who cleave to God would live and not die. In Jewish *Chassidic* thought cleaving to God is done by means of discipleship or following a righteous man. In other words, imitating them.

1 Corinthians 6:17 reflects this truth: “But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit.” The word translated “unites” here is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word, *davak*. Therefore, he who cleaves to the Lord is one with Him. To cleave to Messiah means obtaining eternal life and in the Gospels, eternal life begins immediately upon placing faith in Jesus. We are not just talking about life after death here, but life before death. John 8:51 tell us, “I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps My word, he will *never* see death.” Likewise, John 11:25-26 tells us “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.” This is the eternal life that we are cleaving on to.

Therefore, just as in the Old Testament those who cleaved to the Lord would live, so we too, who cleave to Christ pass from life to life.

Continuing on in this chapter of Deuteronomy we see that the Commandments of God were to be put upon our hearts: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut 6:4-6). These verses are called the *Shema* by the Jews and are repeated daily as one of the key verses of the entire Bible. It is this that Jesus said was the greatest commandment in Mark 12:28. Clearly we are to love God, but what does it mean to love God? 1 John 5:3-4 tells us, “This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world.” Here we see love is connected to obedience and obedience will not be a burden. Note that God said, “These commandments that I give you today *are to be* upon your hearts” (Deut 6:6). He was speaking in the future tense. As we read through the Old Testament we see that the commands of God were burdensome to the Israelites but this was not how things were intended to be. This is also why God promised, “‘This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the LORD. ‘I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts’” (Jer 31:33).

We read in Titus 3:5-6 of a renewal that takes place in Jesus, “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and *renewal* by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Cor 5:17-18 also speaks of a new creation within us: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Part of this renewal was the promise of Deuteronomy 6:6 in that the commandments would be put upon our hearts. The New Testament reveals this being fulfilled in Christians today, “You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor 3:3).

The concept of the law being cast away that is held in so many churches today, is clearly unBiblical. The law was merely to change its form. This was always the Biblical promise: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws” (Ezek 36:26-28). How was this accomplished? “He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Cor 1:21-22). God sent His Spirit as a seal, a deposit and a power that is not separate from God’s law but within it, as it was written on our hearts by that Spirit. We also see in Ephesians, “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of His glory” (Eph 1:13-14). Those who hear the truth, believe it and obey it are marked by His Spirit. Just as God promised through Moses that the Law would be on our hearts, we can give thanks today to see the fulfilling of that promise.

BY BREAD ALONE

When Moses was instructing the Israelites about the commands of God he said, “He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Deut 8:3-4). I’m sure this is a familiar verse for many, but what exactly does it mean? Before we answer this question, look at what Jesus said about our daily needs: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?” Jesus then chides us and says in verse 32: “For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt 6:25-26). We all need food and drink, however, Jesus says there is something out there that gives us sustenance, but it can only be found by seeking God first.

It was generally understood by many of the sages therefore, that Deuteronomy 8:3 could be understood as speaking of the Messiah, the bread from heaven, the divine Word that proceeds from the Father. This verse is remembered by most because Jesus repeated it when He was being tempted by Satan: “The tempter came to Him and said, ‘If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’ Jesus answered, ‘It is written: “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God”’” (Matt 4:3-4). Because it was a Messianic expectation that the Anointed one would bring down food from heaven, the devil was trying to get Jesus to take a shortcut to revealing His identity and using His power for selfish gain. Jesus responds to this temptation by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 where it says in the Hebrew “The Man” does not live by bread alone. It does not say “Man” does not live on bread alone. In other words, Moses was saying that the Messiah would not live on bread alone, but on everything that proceeded out of the mouth of the Father.

This truth, understood by the sages, is reflected in the words of Jesus Himself, “I do nothing on My own but speak just what the Father has taught Me” (John 8:28-29).

WALKING IN HIS WAYS

As we just saw in the above verses, Jesus said He would only speak and do what the Father did. This is important because it is an example of what we are to do as disciples of Christ. Deuteronomy 10:12-13 says, “O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” As we saw in Deuteronomy 8:6, to love and serve God means to obey Him. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul said, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” According to Jewish teaching, imitation is the highest form of discipleship. Following this line of thought, in order to be a disciple of Jesus we are to imitate Him just as Jesus imitated His Father.

Let’s examine this a bit further. In John 8:27-30 we see Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on My own but speak just what the Father has taught Me. The One who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do what pleases Him.” It was for this close imitation, indeed an exact representation of God, that Jesus could say, “Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

The Talmud explains what it means to be disciple: “Rabbi Chama, son of Rabbi Chanina taught, ‘What does it mean, “You shall walk after the Lord your God?” Is it really possible for a human being to walk after the *Shechinah*; for has it not been said [in Deuteronomy 4:24] “For the Lord your God is a consuming fire?” [Therefore, it must mean] to walk in the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He.’ Just as He clothes the naked, as it is written [in Genesis 3:21], ‘The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them, so too should you also clothe the naked. The Holy One, blessed be He, visited the sick, as it is written [in Genesis 18:1], ‘Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre,’ [While he was still recovering from circumcision,] so too should you also visit the sick. The Holy One, blessed be He, comforted mourners, as it is written [in Genesis 25:11], ‘After the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac,’ so too should you also comfort mourners. The Holy one, blessed be He, buried the dead, as it is written [in Deuteronomy 34:6], ‘And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab,’ so too should you also bury the dead”’ (b.Sotah 14a quoting Deuteronomy 13:5).

Thus, as we imitate Jesus, we are actually learning the ways of God. That is the very essence of discipleship and unity with God. That is the very essence of the commandments given by God. As we obey the commandments, we imitate Jesus and, thus, get to know Him better. Therefore, obeying the commandments is not a reason for salvation, it is because of salvation that we seek first the Kingdom of God so that we might know God.

RAIN FROM HEAVEN

When we read of rain in heaven, there is often a bigger picture being painted than what the western church has realized. Typically, there were two rainy seasons and both are connected to the Messiah's coming. We read, "Then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn (*yoreh*) and spring (*malkosh*) rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil" (Deut 11:14). Observant Jews recite Deuteronomy 11:13-21 in their daily prayers as part of the *Shema* twice a day every day. What many of them do not realize is that they are actually proclaiming the coming of the Messiah because it is comparable to the two distinct rainy seasons of the land of Israel.

The autumn (*yoreh*) rains begin in the 7th month and the spring (*malkosh*) rains come around Passover in the 1st month. It is no accident that these months correspond to Christ's first coming at Passover and the foretold second coming during the Fall Festivals. Even from a worldly perspective we see that after the Passover, a long hot summer begins. Spiritually, we know that it has been a long dry season since Jesus ascended into heaven nearly 2000 years ago.

In Hoseas 6:3 we see that this is not just a spiritualization of the rains, but that this is exactly what God intended: "Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge Him. As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth." Hosea is telling us that the Messiah would be coming twice, once at the time of the spring rains and again at the time of the winter or fall rains. The Psalmists alludes to the coming of Messiah as a rain as well, "He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. In His days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more" (Ps 72:6-7). Joel 2:23 also states, "Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, *for He has given you the autumn rains in righteousness*. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before."

As we look deeper into the words, "Autumn" rains (*yoreh*) we see that it has the root *yarah*, meaning "teaching" or "instruction." It seems to be divine planning that this same root word is the one from which the word Torah is derived. As we discussed in the section on Tabernacles, we know that when the Lord returns the second time as the autumn rains, he will be bringing Torah with Him to instruct us in it.

Secondly, when Joel says, "He has given you the autumn rains in righteousness" it could literally be read as, "He has given you the Teacher of righteousness." In fact, Young's literal translation of the Bible says, "And ye sons of Zion, joy and rejoice, in the Lord your God, *for He hath given to you the Teacher for righteousness*. . . (Joel 2:23).

Likewise let us compare the following translations of Hosea where we read in the NIV "Break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until He comes and showers righteousness on you" (Hos 10:12). The JPS however, reads, "[Seek] the Lord, so that you may *obtain a teacher of righteousness*" (Hosea 10:12 JPS Tanakh). The term, "Teacher of Righteousness is a Messianic title found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, showing this was a term that has been long understood as pointing to the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Once more we see that the Hebrew Scriptures are filled with references to the Messiah, all intending to cause the Jew to long for His coming. Likewise, there are many verses in the New Testament pointing us to the same expectation, using the rains as the imagery to do so: “Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near” (James 5:7-9).

THE KINGS COPY OF THE LAW/JOT AND TITTLES

In Deuteronomy 17:18-19 we read of a rule for the reigning kings of Israel: “When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites.” The interesting thing is that at this time in Israel’s history there were no kings. That won’t happen until after the period of the judges within the promised land. Therefore, this begs the question, who is to have a copy of the law before himself?

Interestingly, we must realize that Jesus was the Word made in flesh form. He is the copy of the Torah in human form. In other words, God Himself writes a copy of the law as He writes the Torah upon our hearts, “not with ink, but with Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor 3:3).

This command to write down the law is later seen as the midrash pictures Solomon making his copy of the Torah. As Jewish history records, the words Solomon was supposed to be translating were “He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away” (Deut 17:17). They say that instead, Solomon erases a *yod* (y) from the word *yirbeh*, which means to “multiply”. It is just a jot that the Jews say Solomon removed from one word, however, this changed the whole meaning so that this verse read, “He did not multiply for himself wives and his heart will not turn away.” Erasing the tiny *yod* changed the tense of the verb “multiply” so that it wasn’t an imperative command but a past tense statement implying that having many wives would not turn his heart astray.

Midrash continues: “At that time, the *yod* of the word *yirbeh* went up on high and prostrated itself before God and said, ‘Master of the Universe! Didn’t you say that no letter shall ever be abolished from the Torah? Behold, Solomon has now arisen and abolished one. Who knows? Today he has abolished one letter, tomorrow he will abolish another until the whole Torah will be nullified!’ God replied, ‘Solomon and a thousand like him will pass away, but the smallest tittle will not be erased from thee’” (Exodus Rabbah 6:1). Even if not true, it is certainly an interesting commentary on Jesus’ words that not one jot or tittle would be removed from Torah.

As we know from the Scriptures, Solomon didn't withstand the temptation of women so the Midrash continues: "When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods. . . . For this reason did Solomon say of himself [in Eccl 2:12], 'I turned to consider wisdom, madness and folly.' What Solomon meant by these words was this: He said, 'Because I tried to be wiser than the Torah and persuaded myself that I knew the intention of the Torah, did this understanding and knowledge turn out to be madness and folly'" (Exodus Rabbah 6:1). In other words, Solomon's wisdom became madness because he thought he was wiser than the Torah. Through reinterpretation of the Torah, he was able to ignore the literal meaning of it.

Doesn't this sound familiar to those within the church today? We often assume the literal meaning of the Torah does not apply to us and then place ourselves above the Kings of Israel and God Himself. We read in the New Testament, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). We must ask the question, "Is the church today ignoring God's law and becoming men of lawlessness?"

According to Deuteronomy 17:19 the King was to keep Torah "all the days of his life." Solomon had disqualified himself as a true king by breaking the law, however, Jesus is the true King who did not break one jot or tittle. Therefore, Jesus fulfilled what Solomon was incapable of doing as our king and He kept the Torah fully without compromise.

JESUS, A PROPHET LIKE MOSES

God had promised Moses that in the future He would raise up a prophet like him. This promise is recorded when Peter said in Acts 3:22-23, "For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything He tells you. Anyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from among His people'" (Also Acts 7:37).

As we examine the life of Moses we see that he served in the office of priesthood before he anointed Aaron as priest. Though many view Moses as only a prophet we see that he was actually a priest as well. Likewise, Jesus is "One like Moses" since he was a prophet, priest and king. Hebrews 3:3 also tells us that, "Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses." Hebrews continues to show us that Moses was faithful in the house of God yet Jesus was the firstborn son over the house of God. It only stands to reason then that as one "like Moses", the life of Jesus must reflect a pattern that was set by Moses.

Keep in mind that a prophet is a spokesperson for God, therefore, anyone who states, "thus says the Lord" places himself in the role of a prophet. However, Jesus told us to, "Beware of false prophets" (Matthew 7:15), and "Many false prophets will arise. . . because lawlessness is increased people's love will grow cold" (Matthew 24:11). It seems that these false prophets will bring about a lawless attitude among the people. Paul tell us, "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of His mouth and destroy by the splendor of His coming" (2 Thess 2:8). We read in 1 John, "Many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1-2). In Mark Jesus said, "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect-if that were possible. So be on your guard" (Mark 13:22-23). How will they deceive? John warns us in Revelation 13:13 that a false prophet is coming who will perform many miraculous signs.

So how do we recognize a false prophet? Moses told us that if what is said by a prophet doesn't come true he is a false prophet (Deut 18:21). A true prophet will not counsel against the commandments of God (Deut 13:5). Once identified as a false prophet Moses said, "That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God" (Deut 18:21). Jesus told us that we would recognize them by their fruit (Matt 7:16-17). In other words, bad fruit is a transgression of the law (Torah) and is lawlessness. This is why we see Jesus warning us that, "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matt 7:22-23).

As a result, it is clear that signs and wonders aren't enough to test a true prophet. He must be tested against the Torah. How did Jesus measure up to the qualifications of a true prophet then? As we know, mainstream Judaism says Yeshua was a false prophet. Shouldn't this be easily determined by placing Him against the Torah?

Jesus gave a number of prophecies and if they did not come true He would easily be called a false prophet, however, all of his predictions came true. Some examples include the fall of Jerusalem, judgment on His generation, the sign of the prophet Jonah etc. (Matt 12:39).

Remember that Moses said a true prophet would not counsel against God's commandments (Deut 13:5). Isn't it interesting that many in the church today believe that Jesus got rid of God's commandments? When examined closely, there is no truth to this at all, in reality it is a misunderstanding of the text due to a lack of Biblical knowledge. The fact is Jesus taught His disciples to obey the Torah, even the smallest commandment. He even called them to repentance (turning back to the law and away from lawlessness) from which the law is a standard to tell us what to repent of. Therefore, Jesus was like Moses in that He was a prophet of God, a priest of God and a King.

THE WEDDING SUPPER

A Jewish wedding was in two phases: 1) The Betrothal, and 2) The Wedding. As we examine the wedding process there are many parallels that make it obvious as to why God calls the church His bride.

A betrothal was not like our engagements of today because a betrothal meant you were legally obligated to the marriage. It was very serious, in fact, any infidelity during this time was considered to be adultery. To become betrothed a man gave the woman an object of value declaring her set apart for himself. After that, he would pour out a glass of wine and state a benediction over the cup saying something like, "Behold, you are consecrated unto me with this ring."

As we look at this cup of wine in the betrothal process it has been argued that the cup of Passover was representative of this cup when he promises to return and drink with them the fruit of the vine again in His father's kingdom. The Holy Spirit was the "ring" setting us apart as we see Paul telling us of God, "Who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (2 Cor 1:22, also 2 Cor 5:5, Eph 1:13-14). For the bride to accept the cup and drink from it meant that the bride was accepting to be betrothed. Likewise, the act of communion today is a serious commitment for us to be betrothed to Jesus.

In the betrothal both the bride and the bridegroom were prepared for a ritual immersion (baptism) and in Ephesians 5:25-27 we read, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the *washing with water through the word*, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." In both cases there was a washing needed to be prepared for the actual wedding.

During the betrothal it was also customary for the bride and groom not to see each other on the days before the wedding. The groom was brought to his bride just prior to the ceremony. The Talmud records that in the days of the apostle the friends of the bridegroom escorted the bride to the groom and served as witnesses to keep anything "immoral" from happening too soon. Likewise, God has left us His Spirit and other believers to hold one another accountable and to keep guard over us that we will be presented as pure virgins. Paul said, "I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him" (2 Cor 11:2).

The second phase was the actual marriage ceremony. Here the groom would deliver a wedding contract (*ketubah*) to the bride that was signed by two witnesses. The entire festive event lasted seven days. Because of this, Abimi, the son of Rabbi Abbahu said, "The days of Israel's Messiah shall be seven thousand years, as it is written [in Isaiah 62:5] 'And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.'"

Prior to the actual wedding a bridal chamber (*chuppah*) was built by the groom's father. It isn't a coincidence that Isaiah said in the Messianic age God would spread a *chuppah* over Jerusalem: "Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy (*chuppah*)" (Isa 4:5-6).

At the wedding both the bride and the groom were adorned with crowns and yet Timothy tells us, "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing" (2 Tim 4:8). We also read in James, "He will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him." (James 1:12, also 1 Pet 5:4, Rev 2:10).

The groom wore a white garment called a *kittel* at the wedding (worn also on Yom Kippur) and we see that at the Lord's return He gives His saints a white robe to wear (Rev 19:14).

When the groom arrived at the *chuppah* he was welcomed with the words, "Blessed is he who has come!" Jesus said, "For I say to you, you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord'" (Mat 23:39).

In some cases they would have the bride walk seven circles around the groom which is also reminiscent of the seven circles around the altar in the Temple at Sukkot.

The traditional smashing of the glass that is common today actually traces back to Talmudic times and was simply to remind people not to drink too much.

After the wedding, the bride and groom were sequestered alone for a short time and then would later emerge when the wedding banquet began. This fits nicely with Revelation where we see people will be caught up to Jerusalem with the Lord to be sequestered with Him before the wedding banquet of chapter 19 occurs.

These many similarities simply show that Jesus, as a Jew, reflected upon the Jewish culture and the Word of God to illustrate the truths of the Kingdom of God. We would do well to remember that we are betrothed in a serious relationship with Jesus Christ. In the meantime, a home is being prepared for us and we must wait until the time comes for the groom to snatch us away where we will be sequestered with Him in preparation of the great Wedding Banquet of the Lamb. Come Lord Jesus Come!

I only pasted above section then START WITH SLIDE 231 (Also need to go back to Miriam dying and address the last paragraph with the connection to Aaron and Moses)